

ST

ACTION

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ST GAMES MAGAZINE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF ST WORLD
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4 AUGUST 1988
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33 Games Reviewed

Uninvited, Gauntlet 2
Thundercats, Platoon

Mindfighter, Star Fleet
Revenge II, Super Ski
Lords of Conquest, Pandora
Beyond the Ice Palace, Quadralien
Vixen, Bolo, Cracked, Killdozer
Sidewinder, Shackled
Bomb disposal, Moon Patrol
Star Raiders, Missile Command
Superbreakout, Crystal Castles
Battlezone, Joust

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Interview: Domark
Seven awesome hints and tips pages
including infinite lives for: Foundations
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ACTION PACKED

REVIEWS

THUNDERCATS: "When a popular, animated television adventure is turned into a computer game, the software company can be assured of immediate interest from a vast, avid and enthusiastic audience - the kids! But the game has to be tuned to keeping these zealous and brilliant gamers interested and so the game-play is notoriously tenacious!"

48



BOLO: "Love them or hate them, Breakout clones are released on the market with extraordinary regularity and just when you think the theme has been exploited to the limits, somebody releases the ultimate brick-buster!"

52

LEGEND OF THE SWORD: "With a fighting force of mutated humanoids at his command, the evil wizard, Suzar, has plunged the King-

SORRY NEXT MONTH

ing place of these magical weapons is now forgotten, but someone must seek them out and unravel the Legend of the Sword."

LORDS OF CONQUEST: "This game of strategy is definitely one for the less zap-happy."

54

FEATURE ARTICLES



ACTION NEWS: Of worthy note this month: ST coin-op conversion, Tynesoft's Superman, Barbarian II, Activision renamed, Ocean Operation Wolf, Infogrames - Hostage and Mission Neptune, 8 games from Hewson, Action news special report: Electric Dreams.

4



GIVING THE GAME AWAY: WOW what a month, SEVEN pages of mega hints and tips including: Ninja Mission, Star Trek, Captain Blood, Buggy Boy, Leatherneck, Bubble Bobble, Out Run, Pink Panther and many many more.

38

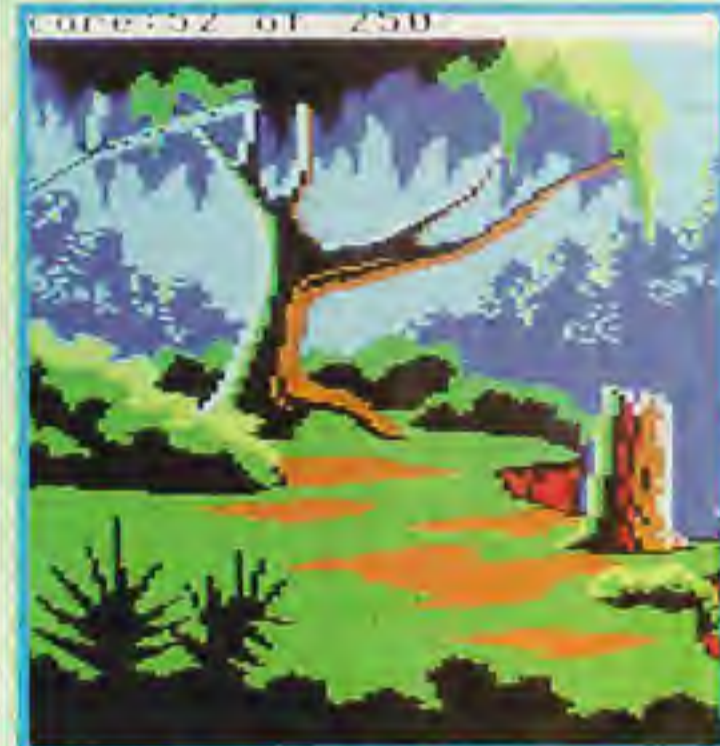
DOMARK: "Think of Domark and most people instantly think of 'name' games, such as, Star Wars, Live and Let Die, Living Daylights, etc. Ask people about the image they project, and bow-ties, striped shirts and straw hats spring to mind. When he visited the Domark offices in London, however, Martin Moth found a lot more to Domark than bow-ties and fancy game titles."

34

*** MEGA FEATURE ***

ATARI OLDIES: "There are stories in every industry which trace massive business empires back to humble beginnings, but few are as diverse or dramatic as the rise and fall...and rise of Atari".

26



*** COVER FEATURE ***

SIERRA QUEST: "Roberta Williams had played the original computer adventure and yearned to write her own. Unfortunately, Roberta had no knowledge of programming and therefore had to turn to her husband, Ken, for help. After some persuasion, Ken started coding his wife's game scenario. Whilst discussing the plot, the two hit on an idea that would bring a huge change in the world of adventuring: the use of high-resolution graphics. Nick Clarkson investigates the innovative and highly underrated results of their efforts."

14

MORE REVIEWS

MINDFIGHTER: "A cold wind drifted across the harbour mouth banking the swirling yellow fog into the ruins of the old wharf. The boy turned, looked away from the cold oily waters, and gazed landwards towards the grey, crumbling blocks of the smouldering city which lay stark and shattered under the wintry pall of the nuclear winter sky."

56

SUPER SKI: "Strap a couple of planks to your feet, grab a pair of broom handles and head with me to the nursery slopes in Microid's latest release, Super Ski."

58



GAUNTLET II: "Remember the days when arcade conversions were invariably long-awaited anticlimaxes? Now, thanks to advancing techniques and the standards set by U.S. Gold, this disappointment could be a thing of the past for ST users!"

60

SIDEWINDER: "There was a time when vertically-scrolling shoot'em-ups were released with annoying regularity. But thankfully, new additions to this prolific theme are being regulated at a more sensible rate."

63

VIXEN: "Corrine Russell, or 'Vixen' as she has recently become known in the software industry, is certainly a 'foxy lady' and a very appealing advertisement for a young, male-dominated market. But 'curvy Corrine' and months of hype have made the game itself seem of secondary importance. Surely it is the quality of the game-play that is most important, isn't it?"

64

UNINVITED: "Hush! Don't scream, it's your own fault after all. You were not invited into our sanctuary. What we do here in the dark corners of this house away from the prying eyes of the world is of no concern to the living."

66

PANDORA: "In the latter part of the twentieth century the British research team, Maincore Computer Development, together with a group of eminent European scientists conceived the starship Pandora."

70



STARFLEET: "You have completed your training at the Academy. Now is the time to take command of one of the most powerful craft in the Universe and set out to hunt the warships of the invading Krellan Empire. The War Begins!"

78

WHAT, MORE?

Letters	20
Revenge II	55
Killdozer/Cracked	68
Bomb Disposal	51
Shackled	50
Beyond Ice Palace	72
Competition Results	23
US Gold Comp	46
Elec Dreams Comp	32

CREDITS

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PLATOON: "Let's face it, after the book, the record and the video, the computer game is the final format and last-ditch attempt to squeeze extra revenue out of a movie. In the past, this has been an excuse for unscrupulous software companies to put the name of a movie to a game which bears only the vaguest resemblance. But can Ocean disprove my scepticism with Platoon?"

74



QUADRALIEN: "Logotron's last release on the ST was XOR, a fine program in its own right. Now, to follow up their success, Logotron, in association with Astral Software, have produced Quadralien."

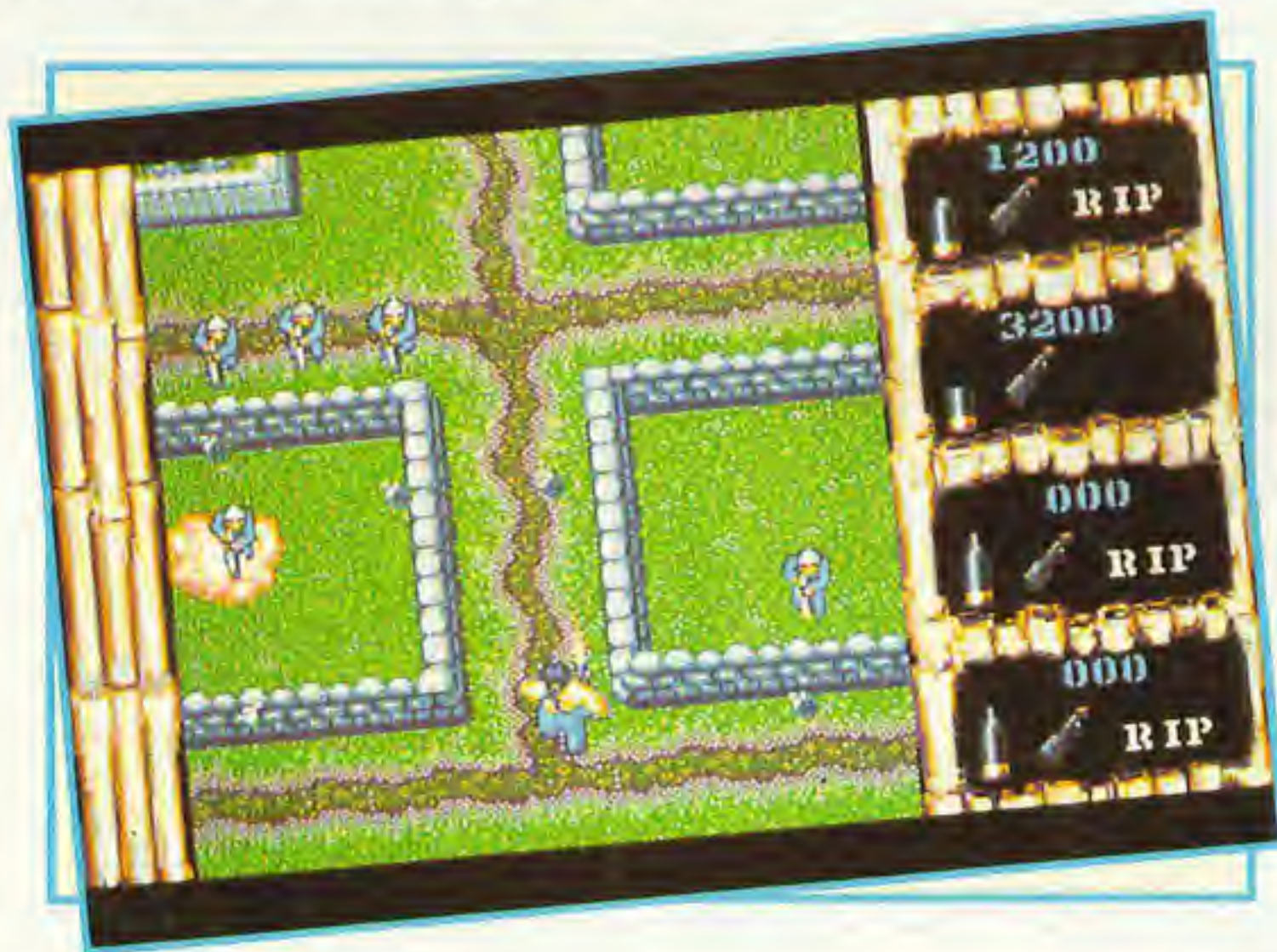
76

ACTION NEWS

COIN-OPS TAKE TO ST GAMES

East Midlands Leisure chose, of all places, the Commodore Show to show off its latest venture in the shape of an ST converted into a coin-op machine. The game being demonstrated was Leatherneck and, naturally enough, the coin-op was demonstrated on the Microdeal stand. The plan is to have the coin-op operating in the same way as a jukebox, in that up to four games will be available to the player.

Other games being discussed are Backlash, from Novagen, and Leviathan, from English Software. U.S. Gold are deep in discussion at the moment with East Midlands Leisure although nothing has, as yet, been decided. I talked with Bruce Jordan of Novagen and he had this to say: 'I think it's great that ST games are going to appear in arcades and pubs. The machine will be basically the innards of a 1040 connected to the coin-op system and disk drives. With the extra memory that the 1040 gives us, we'll be able to incorporate better sound, digitized speech, and so on, that the 520 did not have enough room for'.



GRANDSLAM ARE GO!

Grandslam have won the rights to produce the computer game of Thunderbirds, the puppet sci-fi series with a major cult following. The game will follow as closely as possible the layout of the original films, with the plot containing an intro, build-up and then rescue by Scott, Virgil, Lady Penelope and all the others in International Rescue. Parker says of the deal: 'M'Lady is quite apprehensive about happenin' in a computer game'.

Other products from Grandslam for Christmas include (and I quote) 'a major "Arcade Classic", a licensed tie-up with one of the world's highest paid film stars, and an international "cult-hero".' Further details have been impossible to extract from the people I have spoken with, so you'll have to wait until I can perfect my torture techniques.

GRISTLY NEWS

An update on Chubby Gristle from Grandslam. The game revolves around

Chubby Gristle, a car-park attendant who has a voracious appetite. You must keep him well fed in order for him to remain happy at his job. He must also deal with kids on BMXs, women who have lost their children and traffic wardens who have cluttered up the place with cars. Programmed by the same team who brought us Terramex and Flintstones, this one promises to be the best yet, with the ever-present appeal of a platform game combined with a good deal of variety.



FIRE AND FORGET - WILL WE?

From Titus, the software house that brought you Crazy Cars, the 'hugely successful' (their words) and 'you experience the extent of the games entertainment value within the first twenty seconds' (our words) driving game, comes another game that, curiously enough, at

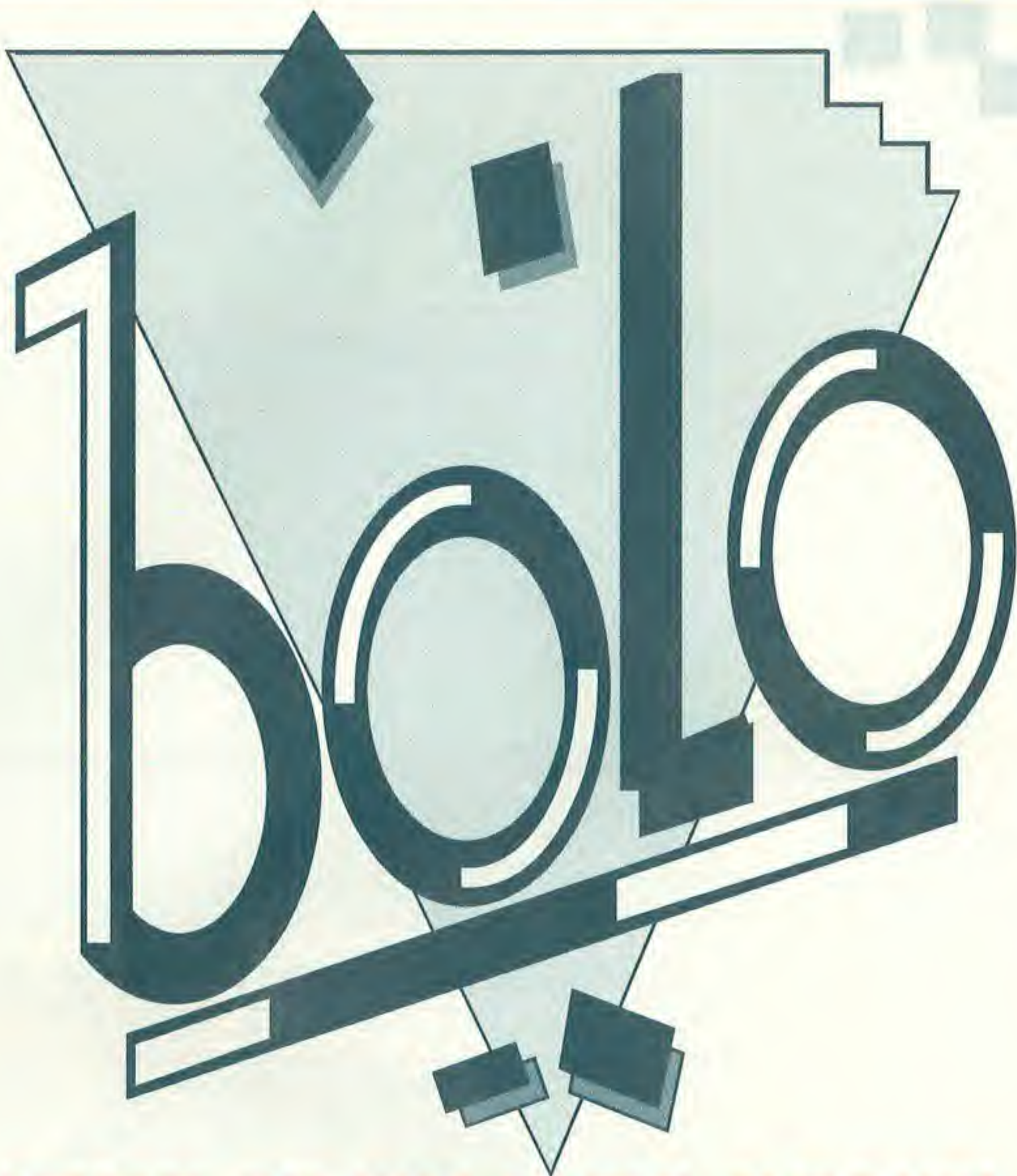


first glance looks very similar to its predecessor.

Entitled Fire and Forget, it is being worked on at the moment for an 'end of June' release. The game can only be described as a military version of Crazy Cars, with helicopters, tanks and spinning tops (spinning tops?) all vying for the chance to send you and your armoured assault vehicle to oblivion. Hopefully, the game will be a drastic improvement on the last one. If so, then it should be a good buy, although whether it will justify its £24.99 price tag is doubtful.

MICKEY MOUSE

Gremlin Graphics are releasing Mickey Mouse for the ST on 4th July. The game revolves round Mickey trying to find the four broken pieces of Merlin's wand in order to defeat the Ogre King. It's a race against time to defeat all the witches, ghosts, spells and ogres, reassemble the



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wand and then battle it out with the Ogre King in an effort to restore Disneyland's former glory.

SUPERMAN LANDS IN TYNE & WEAR

Tynesoft have negotiated a number of U.S. film and character licences and the first to hit the ST market will be Superman. The game is under development and will be previewed at this year's PCW Show and released in late Autumn. By the way, for legal reasons, I have to add: 'Superman is a Trademark of DC Comics Inc.'

Summer Olympiad is ahead of schedule and three events have been completed - Skeet Shooting, Fencing and High Diving. The finished package should be ready by July.

SSI FOR JUNE

U.S. Gold are releasing quite a few titles over the next month or two from SSI. Stellar Crusade is the first of the new titles and will be on the shelves on 15 June. Questron II will follow shortly in July at £24.99.

Priced at a hefty £34.99, Stellar Crusade appears to be a version of 'Carrier Command in Space'. The theme is one of two fanatical groups each trying to colonize a small, but vital, star cluster. As the leader of one faction, it is your task to send out exploration teams to colonize the most important planets in the star system. Then you can settle down to worry about all the other minor points of war, such as, farming raw materials, setting up factories, building shipyards and maintenance facilities, and training troops.

There are seven different scenarios, three short, three medium, and one 'biggie' that spans decades. You also have the choice of playing against the computer or another player.

As for Questron II, it is a traditional fantasy text and graphic adventure that has you dealing with the six Mad Sorcerers in an effort to stop the Evil Book of Magic from being created.

FLIGHT SIM II - NEW SCENERY DISK

SubLogic have just released a 'Western European Tour' disk for use with all their flight simulations. The disk includes scenery covering large areas of Great Britain, France and West Germany. In the best possible American taste, it's just possible to fly from Frankfurt to Helsinki in Finland with full fuel tanks. From there you can fly by 'dead reckoning' all the way to Moscow to land in Red Square! Sounds familiar... Scenery details in-

PANDORA'S DUO

Two games from Pandora later in the year are Galdragons Domain and Debut. Galdragons Domain is an adventure with you pitting your wits against the 'evil wizard Azazael' who is trying to destroy your kingdom. You must find the five gems of Zator in order to defeat evil. The game is played across six levels and features 'player, monster interaction', hundreds of locations and characters and a 32-colour screen. Cost of GD is £19.95.

Debut will also retail at £19.95 and is all about saving the world. Nothing new about that, I hear you say? Well, this time, it's not baddies and evil monsters that are destroying the planet, but Man's pollution and wars. Your task is to stabilize the planet's eco-system. From your satellite, you control weather systems, food chains and redistribute the population whilst attempting to stop the wars and pollution.



clude Tower Bridge, Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe and Notre Dame, amongst many others. Anyway, as an added bonus, with the disk there is a competition to 'find Red Square' and win a trip for two to Europe.

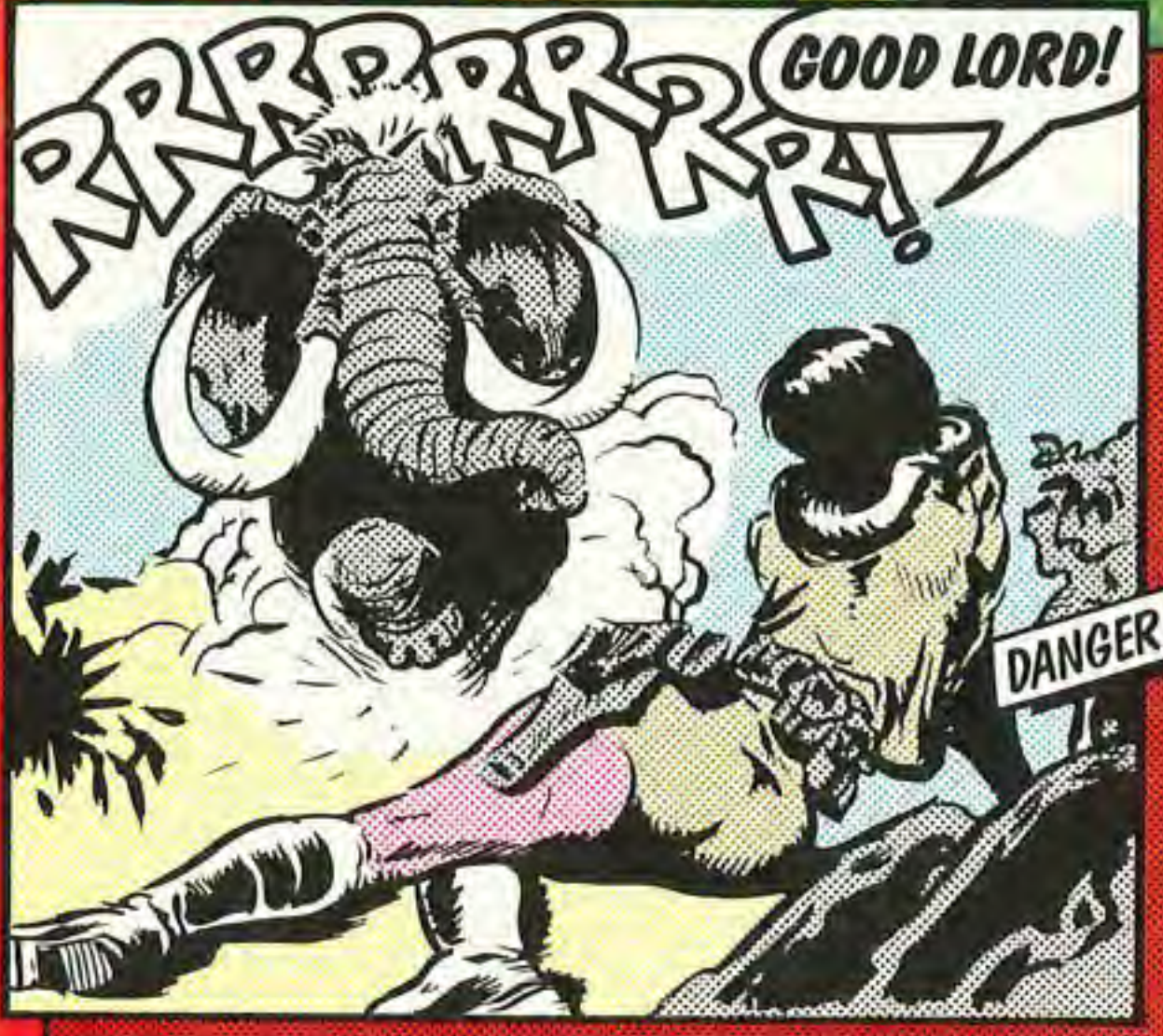
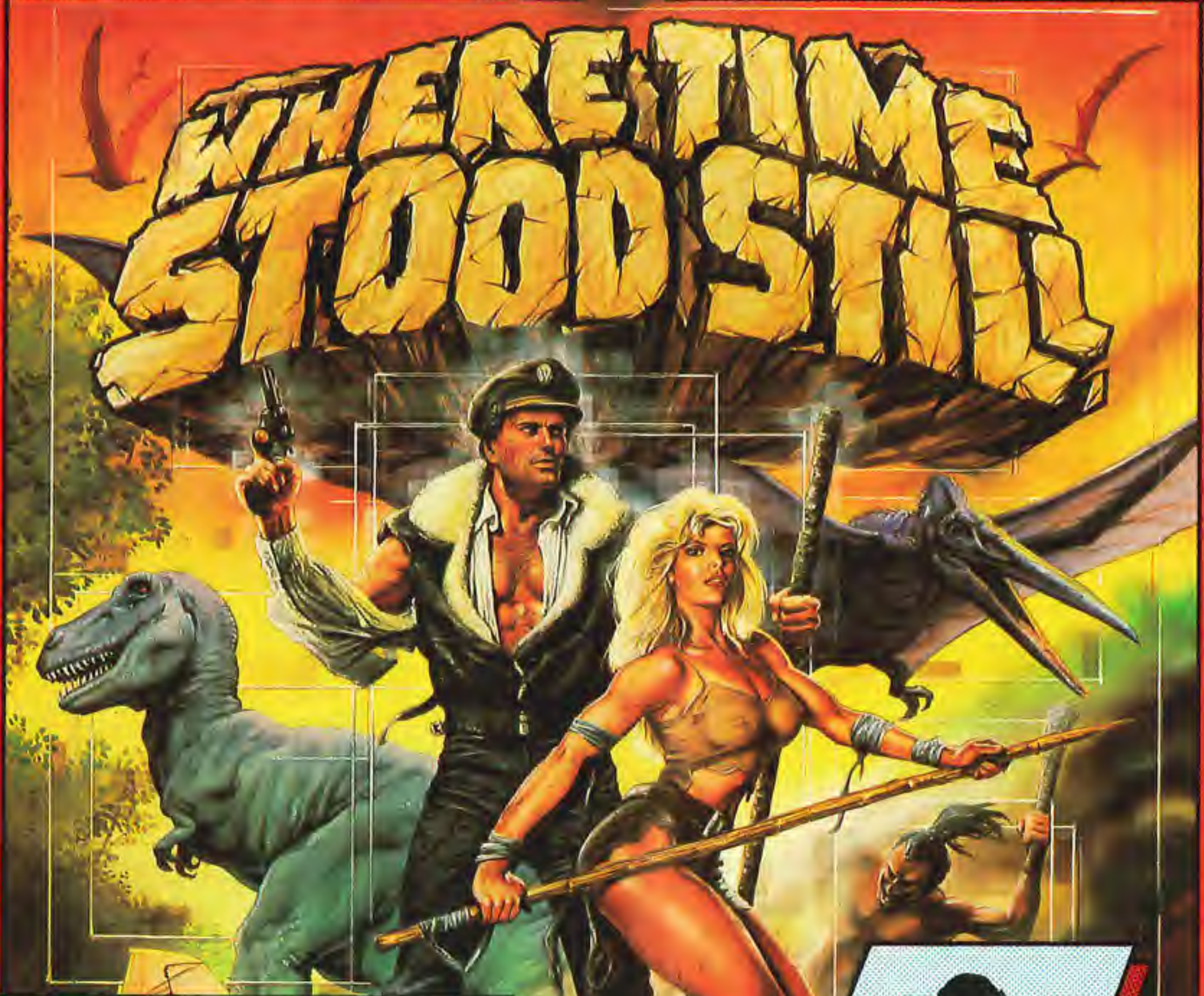
SPORTY LITTLE NUMBER FROM CRL

CRL are working on two games for August with a definite sporting flavour about them. One is going to be a tennis game and the other, a rugby game. No details as yet.

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ACTIVISION RE-NAMED



Activision have announced a change of corporate name to signify the transition from a year-long revitalization program. Therefore, rather than continue with one of the founding names, Activision has now been re-born as Mediagenic. I attended the press announcement at the Cafe Royal where Geoff Mulligan, President of Mediagenic International, and Rod Cousens, Vice President for Europe of Mediagenic International, discussed the future of their company.

The Activision label will remain as the flagship brand for Mediagenic and so, from the user's point of view, things will remain the same.

Geoff Mulligan (left) and Rod Cousens (right) at the launch of Mediagenic at the Cafe Royal.

OCEAN BREEZE

I visited Ocean in Manchester to find out what was happening and literally found myself knee-deep in combat games. Platoon was within one or two days of shipping; the Army Moves release date is, as I write, imminent; and three further combat games were under development - Rambo III, Guerrilla Wars and Operation Wolf. I suppose that this reflects Ocean's attitude towards non-violent games at the moment!

Anyway, very little was demonstrable, but I did have a look at the Operation Wolf conversion scheduled for a September release date and, so far, things look very good indeed. There was also the coin-op version in the offices where the programmers worked and this provided me with the opportunity to test one against the other. Also in development were Arkanoid II - this was into its playtesting stage and release is 'imminent', Where Time Stood Still (mid June), Daley Thompson 88 (September), Victory Road (August), and Guerrilla Wars (September).



Oceans Tracy tries her eye at Operation Wolf

BARBARIAN IS BACK

Yes, Geoffrey (no self-respecting mother would call her child Barbarian, so I've dug deep around the annals of history and rumour has it that Barbarian was originally named Geoffrey) is back in Barbarian II - The Dungeon of Drax. Once again, programmed by Steve Brown, Barbarian features multi-load scenarios and even more weird and wonderful monsters to defeat. This time around, however, you are joined in your quest by Princess Mariana (I wonder if that name was derived from anyone not a million miles from this column?) and you can choose to play either one of the warriors.

Fashion note: As you can see from the accompanying publicity picture, Maria Whittaker and Mike Van Wyjk have been to the local bring-and-buy sale and bought a pair of bison leg-warmers for him and a matching pair of ashtrays for her. Steve Brown quite sensibly stays with classic denim.



INFOGRAVES NEWS

For more than a year, Infogrames have acted as the 'French Connection' between the continent and Britain and commercially, they are one of the most prolific software companies in Europe. But although this Lyon-based company have kept up a barrage of software, they could often have been accused of laundering some sub-standard software for the sake of maintaining this consistency. However, signs that a sparkle of ingenuity was struggling to get out was evident in the highly original Prohibition and Sidewalk. Now, artistically, Infogrames have never looked better and their latest release, Stir Crazy (reviewed in the July issue of STA), has been described by many as the most graphically advanced game available on the ST. Here is a taste of things to come from Infogrames!

HOSTAGE

A game based on an embassy siege is bound to be controversial and 'Hostage' will undoubtedly receive some adverse publicity. You are in charge of a crack team of commandos whose task it is to storm the building, eliminate the terrorists and release the hostages. The game begins outside the



embassy and the terrorists are using a powerful search-light to pick up any would-be infiltrators. With remarkably responsive controls, you must manoeuvre each commando along the perimeter of the building, keeping them out of the spotlight at all times. Each large and realistic figure is fully controllable and can be made to duck, roll, hide and jump through

windows. The terrorist's high-velocity bullets can be seen ricocheting off the wall in the spotlight, which is a good incentive to keep your commandos in the shadows. Hostage is yet to be finished, but if the rest of the game is as good as the opening scenes, it will reinforce Infogrames' new-found belief that quality is better than quantity.

MISSION NEPTUNE

With an entire fleet of nautical games available for the ST, how can Infogrames justify adding to this lengthy list with Mission Neptune? After an extensive loading sequence which rolls the



credits like a Cecil B Demille epic, the first section of this game is a battle on wet-bikes. Using the joystick you must avoid your computer-controlled opponent and bump and kick him off his bike. Then a submarine emerges from the sea and the wet-biker clammers unaided into the tower. The submarine submerges and you are presented with a view from the sub, with an array of controls and instrumentation. The battle continues in the watery depths against enemy subs and you can plot a course to trouble-spots on a map. On reaching these volatile areas of enemy presence, you can don diving gear and aqualung to investigate at closer quarters. Once outside the sub, your mariner is immediately set upon by enemy divers and a rather awkward underwater scrap ensues. Again, Mission Neptune is unfinished, but these games are exciting and noticeable improvements in software quality. Watch this space for further advances from France - vive la difference!

HEWSON 8 FOR '88

Hewson have announced a very busy schedule for their ST releases, with no fewer than eight games to hit the streets before November. First on the schedule is Zynaps, voted Best Shoot-'Em-Up of 1987 by both Crash and Sinclair User readers. Asteroid storms, 'loadsabad-dies' and vast amounts of weaponry make for an action-packed game, even if it is 'yet another vertical scroller'! (With the amount of these on the market, I've got a function key to automatically write those four words) .

Second in line for release is Cybernoid. Raffaele Cecco is programming this game, with fast-moving gameplay and excellent graphics. Netherworld follows in August. Programmed by the Flying Finn, Charlie T, Netherworld takes you to the dark, mysterious world of the Arctic Circle.

Also due for release in August is Roadstar XRI. Programmed by John Phillips, the game received Golden Joystick's Best Original Game 1987 and is a fast-moving, 3-D shoot-em-dodge-em. Exolon is another Raffaele Cecco mega-blast-'em-up featuring 'blasting birth-pods, rampaging rockets and shattering grenades'.

Nebulus, another conversion, is also programmed by John Phillips and has a 'unique rotational 3D scrolling with precise hidden surface removal that makes for compulsive play'. We'll have to wait and see as to whether or not this is true. Stormlord is a scrolling blaster from, yes, you've guessed it, Raffaele Cecco and is set in a fantasy world of toadstools and trolls. Finally, Astaroth - The Angel of Death is an adventure set in dungeons. (What isn't these days?)

LATE NEWS

Melbourne House are re-releasing Little Computer People in July. An old Ricochet title, it will retail at £14.99. Other titles due for release this summer include Rogue, Hyperbowl, Vectorball, Kickstart II, Hacker and Motorbike Madness ('when they finally finish it', I was told!).

Capcom are releasing Bionic Commando very soon, other releases from Capcom, whose games are distributed in this country by U.S. Gold, are Street Fighter in July, 1943 in August, Black Tiger in September, Tiger Road in October and L.E.D. Storm in December. More details of these games as and when they are available.

SORRY WE COULDN'T BRING YOU THE FEATURE ON OUR A1 RATING SYSTEM - PROMISE THAT WE'LL GET THINGS SORTED OUT NEXT MONTH.

STA

ACTION NEWS SPECIAL REPORT: ELECTRIC DREAMS

After several attempts to visit Electric Dreams, I finally managed to track down their offices in Southampton to see the latest developments. I met Amanda Barry of Activision (now Mediagenic) at their offices which happen to be right next door to South Western House, the BBC South offices. There I was introduced to the team, more of which later, and then shown the games currently under development.

SUPER HANG-ON

First on the list was Super Hang-On, a conversion from the smash arcade game. The game is what I would call half finished, with the basic routines there, but a lot of fine tuning still to be put in. The scrolling looked really smooth with, for a welcome change, none of the usual striped track to signify movement. Instead, there was a central road-marking in white and further markings on the side of the road. These, combined with the side of track markers and signs, make for a smooth illusion of speed.

The routine that simulates centrifugal force had not yet



been added, but it will allow you to drift the bike around the corner in one long sweeping movement. The game is able to be joystick controlled, but by using the mouse one is able to make far smoother turns, which aids playability. One excellent feature is that you are able to define the left and right-most limits of the mouse's movement, thereby allowing the player to use either small movements or great sweeping motions of the mouse to control the bike, depending on which he prefers.

Super Hang-On will be available in early August in order to tie in with the British Bike Grand Prix. This year's event is being sponsored by Pepsi, and with their Pepsi Team Suzuki Bikes, they have joined up with Electric Dreams to promote the Super Hang-On game. By the way, if you fancy a trip to the Grand Prix and meet the Pepsi Team Suzuki riders in early August, then dash off to the Electric Dreams competition page (after you've read the rest of this article, Zareh Johannes, or



ZZJ as he is known, is writing the conversion and the game will come out on the Electric Dreams label.

R-TYPE

Catalyst Coders are working on the conversion of the Irem arcade game, R-Type. The graphics in this game are really superb and in some ways better than the arcade version! Andy Percival, the Products Specialist (amongst other titles) was demonstrating the game to me and best described the graphics as 'lurid'. R-Type is a real 'blast 'em into oblivion' game and is going to be a 100% faithful copy of the arcade version, with the snakes, monsters and the horrible, pulsating creature that keeps blinking his one eye at you while sending out the snake through its various apertures, all faithfully recreated. Expect the game to be out in October under the Activision label.



S.D.I.

Also due for release in October is the conversion to the Sega Coin-Op, S.D.I. Programmed by Source, whose last game was Predator, it will feature two-player interaction. This will enable one player to guide the aiming point for the lasers, whilst the other controls the movement of the satellite. Once again, graphics are excellent and the horizontal scrolling and parallax are both well implemented.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE +

Archie Maclean is programming the follow-up to International Karate and it is looking every inch a winner for its late October, early November release. IK+ features three combatants on screen and you must fight it out, scoring points for successful



moves and landing in a crumpled heap if you are on the receiving end of a blow.

The sound effects are perfection, sounding just like the



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old Bruce Lee films. This, along with excellent animation of the characters would make a sellable game in most cases, but I'm happy to report that the gameplay is equally as good, if not better. By using the function keys, the speed with which the players move can be varied.

It really is addictive and with the sickening thuds and cracks made by the onslaught of your opponents, it makes you wince when your player gets a vicious head-butt followed



by a kick to your stomach. He falls to the ground, gasping for breath and holding his stomach! Also in the animation are falling leaves from the tree on the right of the screen (so small, it takes a while for you to notice that anything is happening at all!), worms and spiders that crawl around in the background, seagulls flying into the sunset and (well, I don't know whether or not to tell you this, but the way I figure it, if I don't, someone else soon will) one of the opponents occasionally loses his trouser belt/ sash/ whatever, and his trousers fall down!

ARKYPELAGO

Right, that's it as far as demo's go for the moment, although they are working on a mega-massive adventure game, called Arkypelago, that features 5000 locations! Combine this with the fact that you can face North, South, East or West and you end up with 20,000 different screens. Now that's what I call HUGE. The general scenario is one where you wake up in a little mud hut in medieval times and your father is dying. He asks you to seek out your sister and it is from here that the game starts. Be warned however, that all is not at first what it seems to be... I have been told the general story line and, although I've been sworn to secrecy, I can tell you that it sounds very interesting and will be sure to cause many a sleepless night. Expect this game to reach the shops near Christmas.

AFTERBURNER

As for Afterburner, it is under development and will stay that way for a while yet, as they have given a nine-month develop-



ment time in an effort to recreate the game as closely as possible. To this end they have an Afterburner arcade machine in the office and I have to report that I finished it. (However, I did have 20 credits at the time!) With it being free, one tries all sorts of stupid tricks that you wouldn't dare waste your money on at the arcade, such as, lighting the 'burners whilst flying through the valleys - madness! Certainly brings you out in a cold sweat! For the technically minded, the arcade game has two 16-bit and one 8-bit processors and 3000 Mb of graphics! Now that's what I call awesome! Imagine the difficulty the programmers are going to have recreating all that with one 16-bit processor or one 8-bit processor.

Amongst all this intrepid reporting from yours truly, there were frequent 'damn!' and 'blast!' and other rude words



coming from the chap sitting at the next computer. When asked what his title was at Electric Dreams, Dave Cummins replied with all conviction: 'Mister'! His official title was somewhat obscured by his eccentric rambling on about testing 'toys for rich kids. Oh! Hell, don't quote me on that or I'll be in serious trouble!' He then proceeded to laugh loudly... I suppose play-testing games can affect some people more than others.

Others up to their neck with work in the office were: Stuart Hibbert, Software Producer, who seems to have a telephone permanently attached to his ear; Neil Jackson, Software Producer and Bonita Edwards, Admin Co-ord. Absentee for the day was Saul Marchese, Associate Producer.

The photo-call beckoned, so I quickly took a few of the group and, what with one thing or another, we all ended up in Rod Cousen's office (he was away for the day!) with me taking



photos and the team wondering how long their jobs would last once the photos got printed! Overall, lots of news for the autumn and a great day spent with fun people - I'll be back. My special thanks to Amanda Barry.

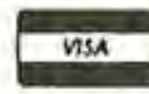




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SIERRA QUEST

"Roberta Williams had played the original computer adventure and yearned to write her own. Unfortunately, Roberta had no knowledge of programming and therefore had to turn to her husband, Ken, for help. After some persuasion, Ken started coding his wife's game scenario. Whilst discussing the plot, the two hit on an idea that would bring a huge change in the world of adventuring: the use of high-resolution graphics. Nick Clarkson investigates the innovative and highly underated results of their efforts."

Using their Apple II and a Koala sketch pad their first game, *Mystery House*, was created. They sold over ten thousand copies of that initial game and many more followed. Their business expanded from the rickety kitchen table and soon took over the whole house. The company name changed to Sierra-On-Line and the business was forced to move.

That all happened back in 1980 and since then Sierra have moved to their current base in Coarsegold, near the Yosemite National Park where they now employ about eighty people. Ken and Roberta still like to keep the homely feel of their business and do their best to treat the staff as one big happy family.

Sierra's games are truly graphical adventures. The characters can move behind, in front, on top, and under many of the depicted objects, hence the 3D description of the

games. Upon reaching an exit point of a scene, a new location is loaded from disk while the previous one disintegrates using an impressive screen-dissolve routine. All the disk accessing slows the games down somewhat. However, as these games are not super-fast zap'em-ups, this factor doesn't hinder the player's enjoyment too much. Text is input at the base of the screen using the keyboard in the normal fashion. Several of the function keys have been pre-set, thus making the more common system com-

mands such as, save, restore, repeat and the like, all single key strokes. A text window appears in the centre of the screen in response to any typed input or program-generated event. These windows contain

appropriate text and remain present until the return key is pressed. These features are present in all of Sierra's games. The format is always the same - only the storylines ever change.

We took a look at some of their major releases: the now famous King's Quest series, the wacky antics of space janitor, Roger Wilco, in *Space Quests I and II*, Leisure Suit Larry's life amidst the Land of the Lounge Lizards, and Sonny Bond's investigation of the Death Angel in *Police Quest*.

The arguments over whether text adventures are superior to graphic adventures still continue. Graphics enthusiasts maintain that the pictures

enhance the games and test one's attention to detail; many clues are often hidden within the pictures. Text aficionados, however, contend that graphics are but mere graffiti when compared to the pictures of the mind's eye.

Whether it is the carefully drawn pictures or the intricate prose that creates the feeling of "being there" remains the individual's choice. But whichever you find the more rewarding, grab that brass lantern - it's time to go adventuring!



KING'S QUEST

Quest for the Crown

King's Quest I: Quest for the Crown

King Edward and his beautiful wife once ruled over the kingdom of Daventry. Their people were prosperous and happy, and peace reigned throughout the land. The King and Queen, however, were saddened because they were childless. They had no son to inherit the throne, nor a daughter to gladden their hearts. As time passed, the King in desperation offered the kingdom's greatest treasures to anyone who could provide them with a child. Alas, the King's pleas were not answered and his Queen soon fell ill. Offering further treasures, the King called for someone to help his beloved wife. Unfortunately, no aid was forthcoming and the Queen sadly passed away. The King had lost



his beautiful wife, the kingdom's valuable treasures and the chance of an heir. Daventry was doomed. The King called his most loyal knight, Sir Graham, to his side. After explaining the sorrowful state of affairs, the king sent Sir Graham to recover the lost treasures, and thus ensure the prosperity of the people. Should the brave knight succeed, the King vowed to take him as his son and eventual heir.

You must become Sir Graham and your mission is simple: just recover the kingdom's lost treasures. Along the way you will meet numerous crea-

tures and beings from both fable and folklore.

Witches, trolls, giants and leprechauns all abound in the land of Daventry. All of your skills will be called upon, both bravery and compassion will be required to eventually return victorious with the missing valuables.

King's Quest is the first of the now world-famous Quest series and represents an easy entry into the world of 3D adventuring. Can you manage to overcome all the odds and save your ill-fated land, or will you fail in your quest?

King's Quest is the first of the now world-famous Quest series and represents an easy entry into the world of 3D adventuring. Can you manage to overcome all the odds and save your ill-fated land, or will you fail in your quest?



King's Quest II: Romancing the Throne

Having rescued the kingdom of Daventry from impending doom, the brave knight, Sir Graham, has now ascended the throne. The kingdom of Daventry is once again at peace with the world, but poor King Graham has become unhappy. After gazing into the magic mirror King Graham spied the face of Edward, the former King of Daventry. Edward's message was grim, unless King Graham can provide the country with an heir it will once again fall into disrepute. Before fading, Edward's image instructed Graham to marry and provide the kingdom with such an heir.

King Graham searched throughout his kingdom for such a bride, but, alas, his hunt for a wife proved fruitless. Again King Graham consulted the magic mirror, and this time, instead of Edward's features, he gazed upon those of a beautiful maiden. The girl seemed sorrowful; she had been imprisoned high in a crystal tower far away in the land of Kolyma by the evil witch Hagatha. Graham knew that this girl, Valanice, would be his Queen. He gathered together his provisions, donned his adventuring cap and vowed not to return without his bride.



You must help King Graham in his search for his Queen. Travel to the enchanted land of Kolyma in search of the magic keys which will lead you to your final goal. The journey will be perilous; meet King Neptune in his undersea kingdom; visit the gloomy castle of the terrifying Count Dracula, come face to face with the old witch Hagatha; and hopefully meet the girl of your dreams, the beautiful Valanice. King's Quest II follows the fortunes of our hero, Graham, in his attempt to find a wife. The game is well thought out and should provide any novice adventurers with a good insight to Sierra's 3D games.

KING'S QUEST II

Romancing the Throne

SIERRA

King's Quest III : To Heir is Human

Space Quest I : The Sarien Encounter

King's Quest III: To Heir is Human, concerns your adventures as Gwydion, a young boy enslaved by the wicked wizard, Manannan. Said wizard simply doesn't like doing the dirty chores around the house. As a result of his lazy

Take on the role of Roger Wilco, a class 4 janitor on board the starlab Arcadia. Having finished testing the Star Generator, a revolutionary new power source, the crew of the Arcadia are making their way back to Xenon when they are space-jacked by the Sariens. This evil bunch of space pirates have decided to capture the Star Generator and use it to help them in their aim of ruling the entire star system.

While all the chaos was happening aboard the spacelab, Roger was taking one of his customary naps in his favourite broom cupboard. The game starts with Roger leaving the confines of his resting place only to find the spacelab overrun by the Sariens. Roger's task is simple: find and destroy the Star Generator, thus ending the power-crazy Sariens rule.

Roger's journey is not going to be easy. With your help he must locate the Sarien base. During the course of his adventures our hero finds himself stranded on the desert planet of Kerona. Here he must befriend a super-intelligent race and help them before they will aid him in his cause.

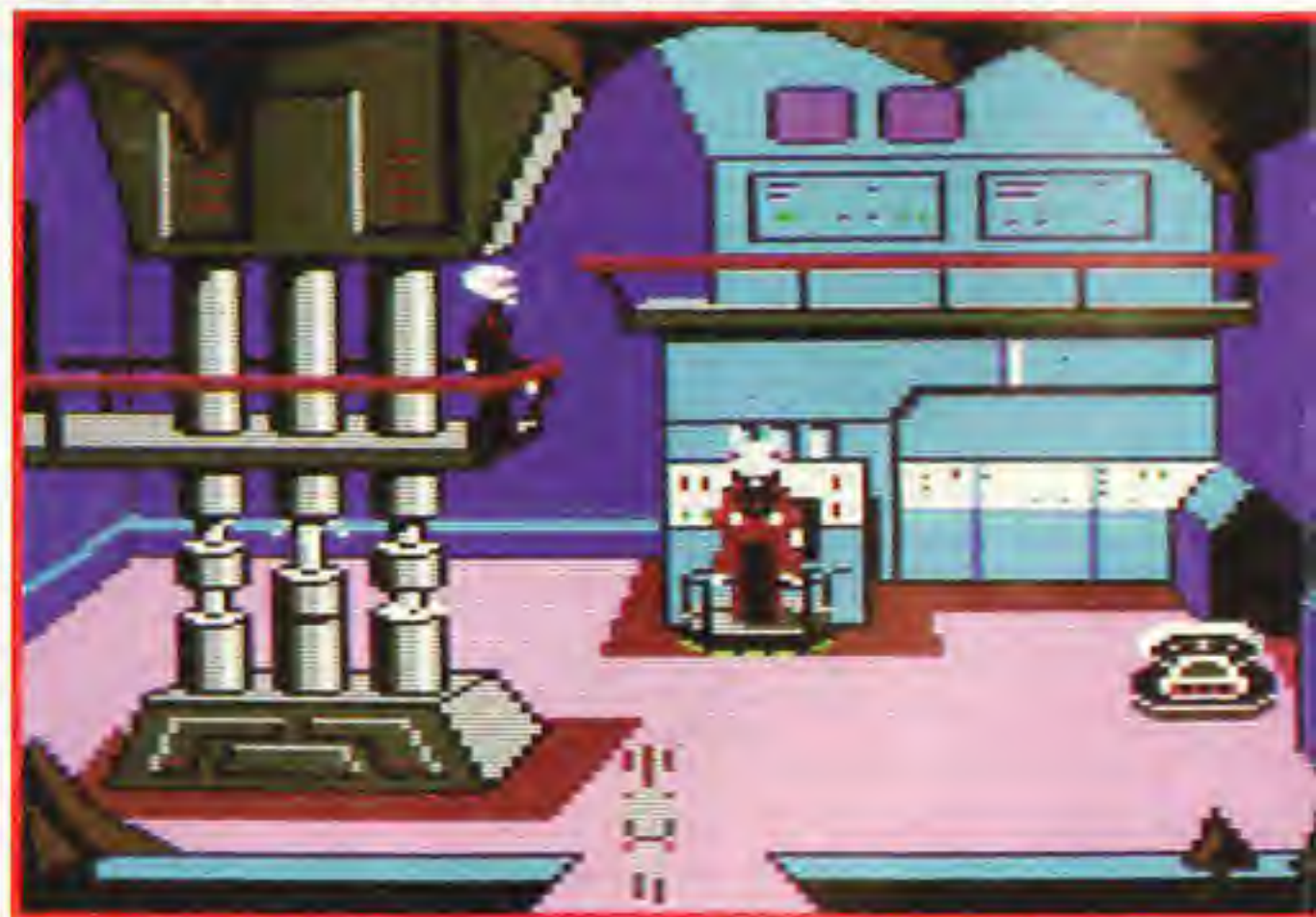
He will travel to the local space port, a place filled with the universe's most undesirable beings. If Roger should get lucky he may even manage to buy a used spaceship and travel to the sinister Sarien base, the Deltaur. Once aboard the enemy craft, Roger is faced with his final task, to destroy the Star Generator and to escape with his life.

The storyline is well thought out and maintains humorous undertones throughout. I noticed the similarities between parts of the scenario and various films, so any science-fiction enthusiast will feel quite at home with this

tendencies, every seventeen years he kidnaps a baby boy from the local village. In return for the boy's housekeeping, Manannan clothes and feeds the unfortunate candidate, albeit rather poorly. What the unsuspecting young lad doesn't know is, that when he reaches the age of eighteen, the wizard will neatly dispose of him and find yet another victim! Your task, as Gwydion, is to escape from the evil thrall of the wizard. To succeed with this mission you will need to learn Manannan's darkest secrets and use them to free yourself from his evil bondage.

The documentation that comes with the package, provides helpful instructions about ingredients and directions for certain spells, which may aid you in your quest. The game does not stop after you have managed to conquer the evil wizard. With the knowledge you have gained, you must make a perilous journey to a distant kingdom; there you must help free the land from the ravages of a terrible monster!

King's Quest III, although one single story, does have several sub-plots. Gwydion must first find a way to rid himself of the evil wizard. The poor boy must also learn how to conjure powerful spells before he can embark on his perilous journey across the high seas with a group of reckless pirates. If the boy is successful he will find the lost kingdom of Daventry and his real parents, King Graham and Queen Valanice. King's Quest III is one of the more challenging titles currently in Sierra's range. The game is fifty per cent larger than any other previous game and it is recommended only to the more seasoned players.



game. Space Quest represents a wonderful challenge and is a good game for an intermediate player.

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SPACE QUEST II

VOHAUL'S REVENGE

Space Quest II : Vohaul's Revenge

Having briefly enjoyed his short-lived fame, Roger Wilco finds himself as the head, and only, janitor aboard the Xenon 4 Orbital Station. One day, while cleaning a small space freighter, Roger is jumped by a couple of apes and transported to the secret hideout of the evil Sludge Vohaul. Having had his plans thwarted once by Roger, Vohaul has decided to take no chances this time and has our hero transported to the nearby mines on the planet of Labion. Having failed to conquer the planet of Xenon once already,



Vohaul has devised a foolproof plan. The evil, demented scientist has decided to dump hordes of genetically engineered door-to-door insurance salesmen on Xenon, thus ensuring the complete insanity of every human being on the planet.

Whilst Roger is being transported to his new place of employment he has the misfortune to crash on the planet of Labion. After having his fall broken by one of the unfortunate guards, Roger emerges unscathed. With the knowledge of Vohaul's diabolical scheme, Roger sets off to avert the launch of the hideous salesmen.

The game is split into two definite stages.

The first sees our hero bungling his way through the dense jungles of the planet Labion in an attempt to find a means of returning to Vohaul's fortress. Should Roger manage to return to his arch-enemy's hideout he must then avert the launch of the salesmen and once again escape with his life. Along the way, Roger will meet many strange and wonderful creatures, some friendly, others just plain hungry.

Space Quest II continues where its predecessor left off and the game has even more humour than the first chapter and is noticeably larger. Space Quest II is recommended for space fanatics everywhere and, again, is of an intermediate level.



Leisure Suit Larry

Step into Larry's loafers and travel downtown to the Land of the Lounge Lizards. Larry Laffer, (Boy, his Mum and Dad must have had a sick sense of humour) is every girl's worst nightmare. He still lives with his parents; he has just turned forty; and he's still single. And, as if this were not enough, he's balding, grey-haired (covered with Grecian 2000, of course), wears gold medallions, has Ultra-Brite white caps, wears the finest 100% man-made permanent press-suits and has halitosis that could kill at a hundred paces! Apart from these minor faults, Larry is just your everyday, loveable kinda guy.

So, become Larry Laffer the loveable nurd for one rip-roaring night. Visit seedy downtown bars, where not even Omar Sharif's best pick-up lines would work. Help out absolutely plastered drunks and become totally intoxicated yourself. Ride in overpriced cabs; become a living lamp-post for a four-legged friend; and even meet a monk who loves to make an exhibition of himself! Of course, you are really looking for that special someone with whom you want to settle down and spend the rest of your days. Try looking in bars, discotheques, the casino or even the local 24-hour we-sell-everything store.

Along the way Larry will meet up with all kinds of low life, often with the most hilarious results. Life in the Land of the Lounge Lizards is by no means cheap, so Larry could try his luck at the local casino. The program includes a blackjack game where our hero can gamble away his hard-earned cash. Larry's life is both fun and exciting to play, but as the game's contents are maybe a little risqué, the programmers have included a special age detector where a player has to answer five topical questions related to his or her earlier years.

Leisure Suit Larry's adventures in the Land of the Lounge Lizards is not essentially a difficult game, especially for anyone matching up to Larry's credentials. So if you fancy a night on the town without the hassle, don your leisure suit and head on downtown.

NUMEROUS
HANDLES
ENDS
FOR ADULTS

Leisure Suit Larry III

THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS

SIERRA

POLICE QUEST

IN PURSUIT OF THE DEATH ANGEL

Police Quest : In Pursuit of the Death Angel

Take to the streets in the form of Sonny Bonds. Sonny is a uniformed officer who works for the Lytton Police Department. Just lately there has been a noticeable rise in the crime level around the town; vice, drug trafficking, even murder - it all seems to be happening in Lytton just lately. The local press have dubbed the mastermind behind this wave of crime as "The Death Angel". Law-abiding citizens are now scared to walk the streets. It's now up to you, a faithful "Blue Knight", to serve and protect your community from the dastardly dealings of the "Death Angel"!

Sierra's Police Quest is not supposed to be a fantasy game. Written by Jim Walls, an ex-police officer, the game is meant to be a factual account of many true happenings. Players will be required to follow strict police codes and ethics when dealing with suspects. Attention to detail is essential; careless mistakes could allow an obviously guilty party to walk free from Judge Palmer's courtroom. Personal safety, that of yourself and fellow officers, is also of para-



mount importance. One simple lapse and you could find yourself on the coroner's slab!

Not all police work is glamorous, as a uniformed officer you may find yourself undertaking very mundane routines. Speeding drivers, bar brawls and drunken drivers all have to be watched out for. Should you manage to cope with the run-of-the-mill work, you may be assigned to the plain-clothes Homicide Division. Follow the case of the "Death Angel" closely and you may even be called to infiltrate his gang.

Police Quest is by no means an easy game, especially for anyone unfamiliar with American law. The game's car-driving sequence is rather tricky to control but my advice is to persevere, it's worth it! Police Quest is probably suited to the more seasoned player, the game itself consisting of progressively difficult stages. Just one hint for anybody playing the game: the telephone number for American Directory Inquiries is 411. **STA**



SIERRA QUEST

Gameplay vs. Graphics

The ST is my first computer and I play a lot of games. It seems that many sacrifice gameplay in favour of pretty screens and digitized speech. Lots of work is done to make them look good while the gameplay suffers. Some recent disappointments include U.M.S. and Captain Blood.

I was very excited about the former as I've played a lot of war games in my time and the idea of a computer opponent and custom-defined units was great. Unfortunately, the actual 'wargame' rules themselves are very poor. Take a look at the way archers behave, firing over hills and through woods at one set of units, while actually under attack from another. The computer seems to have given them the instruction to fire at the most powerful units within range whatever else is going on. Thus it is impossible to hide units from fire, since their attack value is far too high and they therefore come under attack. Other factors, such as, combined units fighting in sequence instead of as a whole, etc., mean that it is impossible to recreate any battle - it's as realistic as chess!

Captain Blood is more an exercise in graphics - have you found any Numbers yet? Do you care? Moan! Moan!

ST games are, on the whole, very good, but still too shallow in a lot of cases. While I'm moaning, Xenon is far too tough and Carrier Command is really boring. ('What! But it got such good reviews' I hear you cry. Yes, but it is still really boring, slow and island taking is far too easy.)

Have I anything good to say on software? Am I trying to sell 'Dungeon Master'? (Ha! Ha!) I've had loads of fun playing games and none of the above stopped me playing the games for hours and hours. I would be interested to hear your views on current games (i.e. a tendency towards showy and technically impressive games rather than long-term playability).

I like ST Action a lot, by the way. I've been waiting for a games magazine for the ST. Wading through all those Speccies and C64s in rival mags in search of one or two reviews was bad news. Looks as though you play the games too - I get the impression some reviewers just read the press release and take a quick look! A few more closing comments. More on budget games (just found ST Karate rather good!) Items on games released before ST Action started (where can I get Mercenary?)

Please get a little tougher on your reviews. If a game is slow and boring, say so, at £20+ a game I can't afford to buy lemons.

C Lloyd
Bath, Avon

I am afraid that, in some ways, I have to agree with you on the lack of playability on some games. It's

**The Letters Desk,
ST Action,
10 Theatre Lane,
Chichester,
West Sussex,
PO19 1SR**

always been this way. No matter what computer you own or have owned, there are bound to be mediocre and downright duff games on the market. However, with 16-bit prices being so high, one's tolerance towards a bad game is much less. After all, two or three pounds on a duff 8-bit game can be written off as a bad decision, but £20 down the drain is a minor catastrophe. Generally, however, the quality of software is improving each month. One point that I'll put forward for comment is that, with early 8-bit games and their lack of quality graphics, the gameplay had to be good in order for people to buy the game and remain interested. With 16-bits, there tends to be less emphasis on gameplay because the software houses have found that games with excellent graphics will sell well. The way I see it, though, is that both can be combined quite simply to make a really good game. I would like to hear any views you have on this subject.

Try any mail order shop or ring Novagen on 021-449 9516 for Mercenary. And as for getting a little tougher on reviews, how much further (e.g. with comments on games in past issues, such as, '...a game with no flow and little appeal' and 'shelve this lacklustre game') do you want us to go?

Ode to an ST novice (or 'Fun on my ST')

I just could not believe it
T'was too good to be true
A magazine upon the shelves
That was completely new.

A shiny cover, colour pics
And loads of fun-packed pages
I read it all from start to end
It took me simply ages

Reviews of joysticks - great idea
I always meant to buy one
But choosing it is difficult
I've still not got it done

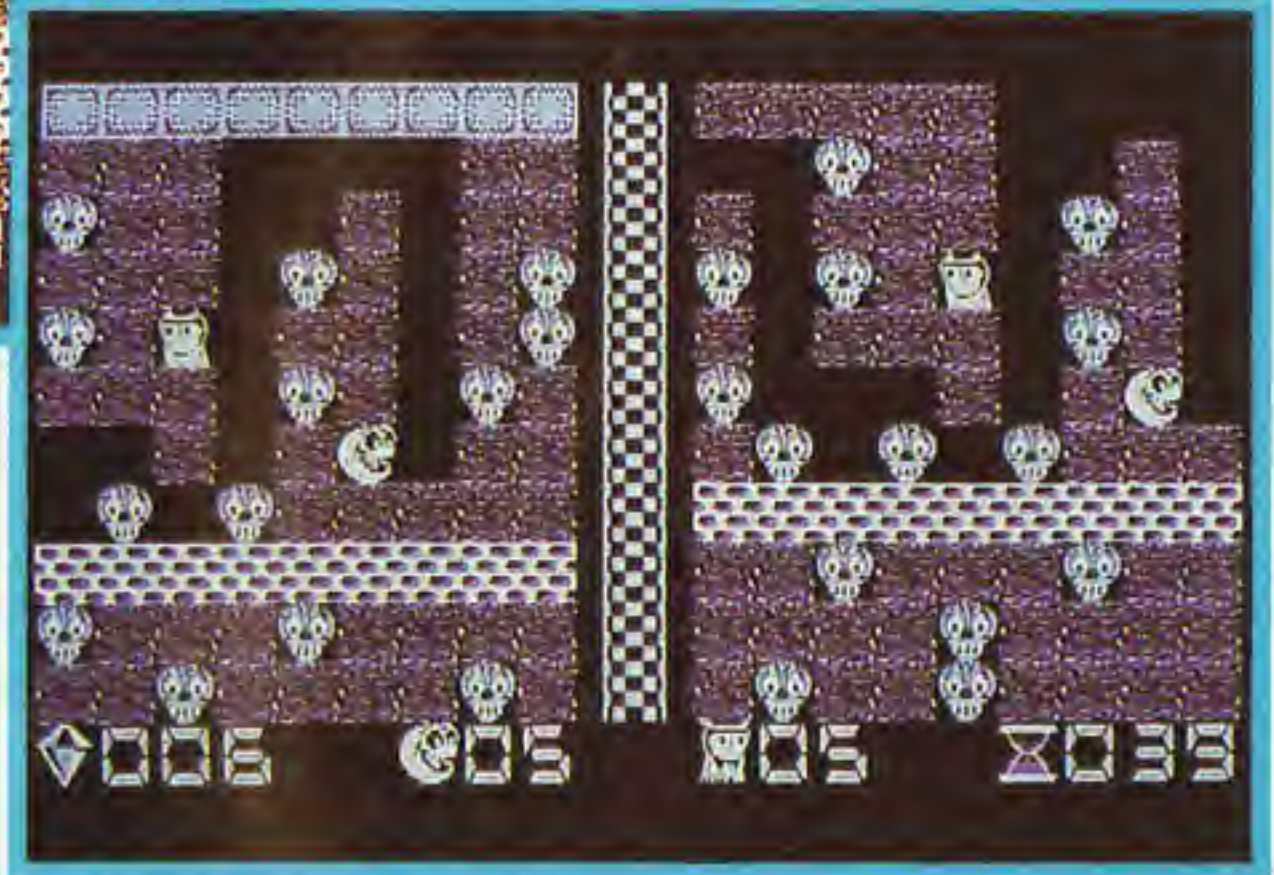
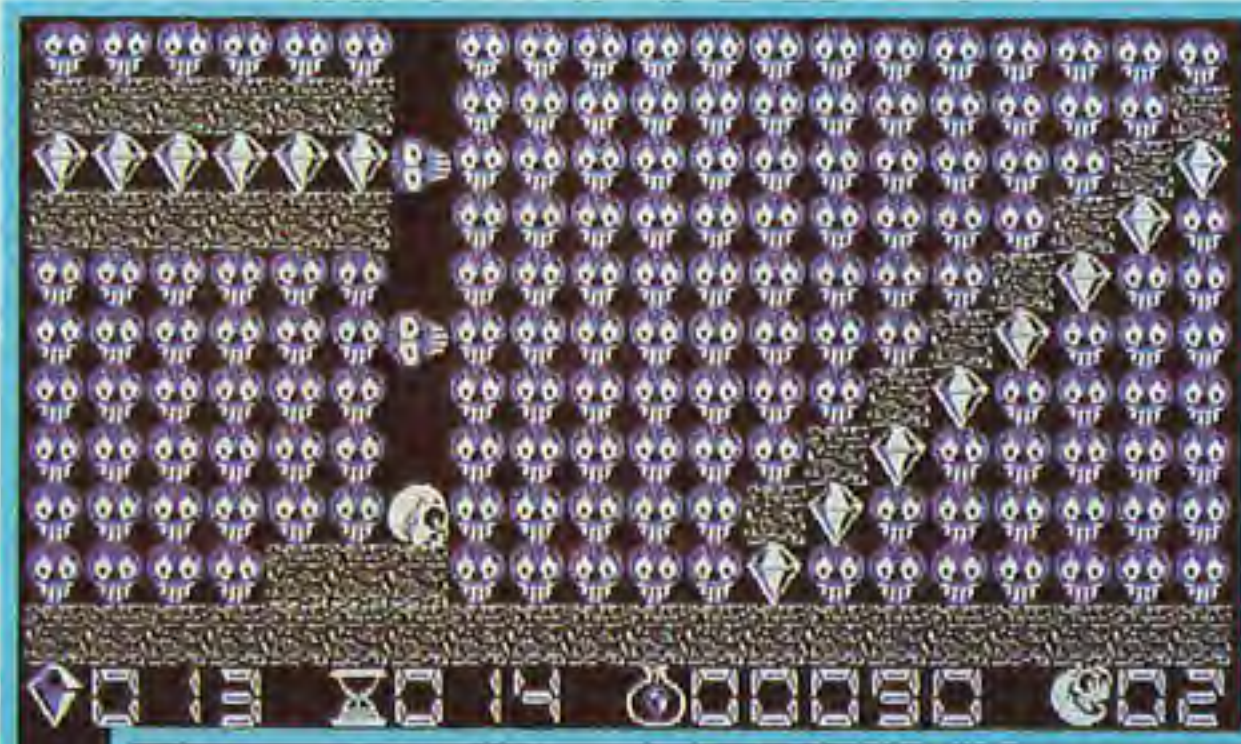
And lots of games were tested
And the comments were extensive
I'd really like to try some
But they're all so damn expensive

SKULLDIGGERY

*Skulldiggery caverns are full of treasure and deadly hazards too!
You take the part of a bouncy cave mite with a strange appetite for treasure.*

There's plenty about, but watch out for those tumbling skulls, the crazy ghosts and the vicious bats.

Every one of the 100 Skulldiggery caverns is packed full of challenges; creatures to dodge, treasure to collect and mysterious puzzles to solve. It runs on any 520 or 1040ST in colour or mono using one or two joysticks or keys. You can play by yourself or with a fellow cave mite in the amazing simultaneous two-player mode: Both players on-screen and in the same cave at the same time! Co-operate or compete, the choice is yours!



Skulldiggery was designed and written by the team who bring you ST Action every month.

Skulldiggery is now available by mail order ONLY for just £12.95 (p&p inclusive). Send cheques or postal orders made payable to 'Man Made Software Ltd.' to:

Skulldiggery Offer, c/o Gollner Publishing Ltd, 10 Theatre Lane, Chichester, West Sussex. PO19 1SR

Please send me Skulldiggerys at £12.95 each:

Name

Address

Postcode Amount enclosed:

**THE
OFFICIAL
VERSION**

I could shoot 'em, I could race 'em
I could simulate or bomb 'em
And the semi-clad temptresses
Could keep their clothes still on 'em

If I pirated a few games
Then that should be deplored
I just don't need a load of games
I just don't get that bored

I only got my ST
About a month ago
Is anyone else as 'lost' as me?
I'm sure we'd love to know

They said 'we want YOUR letters'
And I thought 'could that mean me?'
I never thought I'd have this much
Fun on my ST!

P Reynolds
St. Barts
London

P.S. LOVE the mag!

Wanted: one correspondent

I think you should make a pen-pal section in your magazine. I am sure most people would like this.

I would like a pen-pal myself who will swap hints, tips and pokes for the ST. I am 13 years old and as well as playing on my computer, my hobbies are football, tennis, reading, swimming and table tennis. Please print my letter as I am sure there are lots of Atari ST owners out there who would like a pen-pal. Oh! And by the way, I would prefer a female pen-pal.

Yours hopefully,

Stuart Parsons
74 Gravel Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 6LT

Eyestrain on TV text

I hope that all software houses follow the example of Level 9's Trilogy and release text adventures with variable size text. Small text may be fine for hi-res colour monitors but, for those of us who can only afford to use the humble TV, it can cause a lot of eyestrain.

Can you help me with this question? As you are a dedicated games magazine is there a chance of running 'The List' as a regular feature but with the overall scores at the side of the software. This would

be helpful as a reference guide to the games. To my knowledge nobody has done this yet. Many gamers would no doubt agree that flipping through piles of magazines' index' to find out if a game has been reviewed is not much fun.

I like the magazine's layout and everything that is included, so keep up the good work and I may subscribe.

D A Godden
New Selston
Notts

I hope all software houses are taking note of your first point on variable text size, as this is a frequent criticism. We will be running 'The List' at regular intervals to update people on software releases, and we are seriously considering your advice. How about the rest of you? Would you like to see 'The List' as a regular, say quarterly, feature. If so, what would you like to see incorporated within it. Drop us a line, as the say, to the usual address.

Reality, or fiction?

I am asking for help over the game 'Alternate Reality'. Could you find out from U.S. Gold when the follow-up disks will be released? As I expect you are aware, the Alternate Reality game was advertised as the first disk in a set which build up your character to enable you to play the other parts of the game. Promised in the handbook are 'The Dungeon', 'The Arena', 'The Palace', 'The Wilderness', 'Revelation' and 'Destiny'. I rang U.S. Gold as to when the Dungeon disk, which is available on other formats, would be available for the ST, but all I could get was a 'don't know'. As part of this games marketing and the reason I bought it was the fact that the seven games formed part of a series, I feel a bit cheated that nothing else is forthcoming. I am 39 years old now but would like to complete the game before I retire. I have spent some considerable time mapping the city and building my characters, now I need the next part of the game. Please see if you can find out what is happening.

Richard Ellis
Stroud

I am afraid that U.S. Gold do not deal with Datasoft any more, and the distribution in this country is now

WINNERS

Infogrames Competition winner

The competition set in the second issue of ST Action in conjunction with Infogrames is now over and for those of you who are wondering who the lucky winner is, then wait no more:

Keith Wolstenholme, Higher Blackley, Manchester

Keith, you've just won yourself a fabulous Sony Walkman WMF 107. As for the answers to the competition, here they are:

- 1) Armadillo*
- 2) Eiffel Tower*
- 3) Jean Michel Jarre*
- 4) Chamonix Challenge*
- 5) Get Dexter II*

Code Masters Competition

The winners of the first 25 copies of Code Masters' Grand Prix Simulator are: Simon Bishop, Leigh-on -Sea; Steve Wood, Wombourne; David Batty, Barnsley; Derek Woodley, Bitterne; Buz Billins, Staines; Tim Bratton, Steyning; James Whewell, Folkestone; Ryan Birchall, Brighton; Mark Cameron, Whitley Bay; D Orosun, Hanley; Stephen Dabbs, Rochford; Sean McDonald, Glasgow; S C Dawkins, Rutland; Paul Steward, Shrewsbury; Saleem Siddiqui, Chiswick; David Phillips, Fulham; David Mackenzie, Oban; J A Franklin, Harlow; Jason Lord, Felixstowe; Paul Vaughan, Horsell; Anthony Murana, Egham; M Sims, Yarmouth; Phillip Hughes, Loughborough Park; Chris Corker, Westergate; Graham Brown, Benton.

The answers to the questions set are:

- 1) Richard Darling*
- 2) James Wilson*
- 3) 20 years*
- 4) 21 years*
- 5) October 1986*

being handled by Grand Slam. I phoned Grand Slam about Alternate Reality and they said that they are now handling all the Datasoft products in this country. As for the follow-ups to AR, we will just have to be patient for the time being until Grand Slam can come up with more details. However, Datasoft, being a U.S. company, write primarily for the U.S. market and thus the ST is not as great a priority as, say, the PC. However, expect something to turn up in our news pages within the next few months with details of forthcoming Datasoft products.

Price controversy

So you want letters? Well, anything to oblige a good magazine. I recently read an article in a certain magazine saying that it was the user's fault that software prices are so high. They were saying that proposed budget labels were upping their prices to keep the High Street retailers happy. The idea being that we expect to pay twenty-odd quid for a game. Well, let me tell you that I've never paid the full price on an ST game and I don't really want to pay twenty-five pounds for a game. Let the software industry beware, if the public believe that they are overcharging, then piracy looks all too legitimate.

Ian Black
Wantage

The pricing of ST (and Amiga, for that matter) games always seems to be cropping up in conversation with gamers, so I'd like to hear more views on this subject, both from gamers and the software houses.

Profiles please

Well, what can I say, other than thanks for being the first really above-average ST magazine. I particularly like the way you review programs, with loads of colour pictures and good, comprehensive descriptions of games. The U.S. Gold article was also very interesting and I look forward with interest to seeing more of the same type of article.

One thing I would like to know concerns ST Action. When is it due out each month (as I can't afford a subscription)?

Please pass my thanks on to Nick Clarkson for the help with Police Quest, as I was stuck for weeks and now can continue playing.

Norman Tierney
London N16

We will continue to feature articles such as the U.S. Gold write-up and, as such, is a regular part of the magazine. We are going to diversify a little from time to time, as with issue 3's Headlines PR (now Barring-

ton Harvey) profile, to feature other elements in the software entertainment industry that all help to bring you the games at the end of the day.

ST Action is normally out on, or around the 15th of each month preceding publication date, i.e. the August issue will be on the streets around the 15th July.

Picture problems

I would like to be able to take pictures of my high scores from the television. Unfortunately, I never have any success, yet your magazine is full of perfect screen shots. Could you tell me EXACTLY how you do it please? I have a manual 35mm SLR camera with a 50mm lens. What do I do now?

Robert Eventine
Oldbury

The first thing to do, is to use a very slow shutter speed. David Stewart, who has been taking most of our screen shots for some time now, could not be persuaded to divulge his hard-earned secrets. However, he did say this: "Aim to use a shutter speed of 0.5 seconds or slower, with an aperture of about f16 using a 100ASA film; the rest is down to experimentation. I have masses of screen-shot data, and the only way to get it absolutely right is to find out what does and doesn't work and make a note of it. You may have to use an exposure of up to 10 or 20 seconds for dark images, so you really need a tripod and a self timer or remote release in order to avoid camera shake. If you really want to make sure you get the picture you want, set up the camera and take about 3 shots of the same screen, all using different shutter speeds - one of them is bound to come out. Oh, and use colour print film if you're not going to have the shots published or enlarged - it's more tolerant to inaccurate exposures, and don't forget to shoot in a darkened room!"

Note: roving reporter Martin Moth, took the Electric Dreams photos in this issue of STA with a bog-stock EI-cheapo Praktica MTL3, and he's no expert, so it can be done! Dave admits to using his wizzo Canon T90 in its manual mode. He says that it's really nice to use, but the assorted computers and light-meters built into this mean machine aren't often used for this kind of job.

STA

NEW LOW PRICE POINT!

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HAVE CAUSED PRICES TO RISE. PLEASE
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When you purchase any Atari ST keyboard, you will not only receive the best value for money computer on the market, but you will also receive the following from Atari Corporation as part of the package:
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In addition, we at Silica would like to see you get off to a flying start with your new computer, so we have put together a special **ST STARTER KIT** worth over £100, which we are giving away **FREE OF CHARGE** with every ST computer purchased at our normal retail prices. This kit is available **ONLY FROM SILICA** and is aimed at providing users with a valuable introduction to the world of computing. We are continually upgrading the ST Starter Kit, which contains public domain and other licensed software, as well as books, magazines and accessories all relevant to ST computing. Return the coupon below for full details.

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At Silica Shop, we have a dedicated service department of seven full time Atari trained technical staff. This team is totally dedicated to servicing Atari computer products. Their accumulated knowledge, skill and experience makes them second to none in their field. You can be sure that any work carried out by them is of the highest standard. A standard of servicing which we believe you will find **ONLY FROM SILICA**. In addition to providing full servicing facilities for Atari ST computers (both in and out of warranty), our team is also able to offer memory and modulator upgrades to ST computers.

1Mb RAM UPGRADE: Our upgrade on the standard Atari 520ST-M or 520ST-FM keyboard will increase the memory from 512K to a massive 1024K. It has a full 1 year warranty and is available from Silica at an additional retail price of only £86.96 (+VAT = £100).
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We aim to keep stocks of all Atari related products and our warehouse carries a stock of over £1/2 million. We import many software titles direct from the USA and you will find that we have new releases in advance of many of our competitors. Unlike dealers who may only stock selected titles, we have the full range. In addition, we carry a complete line of all books which have been written about the Atari ST. A range as wide as ours is something you will find available **ONLY FROM SILICA**.

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Rest assured that when you buy your ST from Silica Shop, you will be fully supported. Our free mailings give news of releases and developments. This will help to keep you up to date with new software releases as well as what's happening in the Atari market. And in addition, our sales staff are at the end of a telephone line to service all of your Atari requirements. If you purchase an ST from Silica and would like any technical advice, we have a full time technical support team to help you get the best from your computer. Because we have both the staff and the systems specifically dedicated to providing after sales service on Atari ST computers, we are confident that our users enjoy an exceptionally high level of support. This can be received **ONLY FROM SILICA**.

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Most orders are processed through our computer within 24 hours of receiving them. Most hardware orders are sent by the overnight GROUP 4 courier service **FREE OF CHARGE** to customers within the UK. This method helps to ensure minimum delay and maximum protection.

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We hope that the combination of our low prices, FREE UK delivery service, FREE Starter Kit and FREE after sales support, will be enough to make you buy your Atari equipment from Silica Shop. If however, there is something you wish to purchase, and you find one of our competitors offering it at a lower price, then please contact our sales department, providing us with our competitor's name, address and telephone number. If our competitor has the goods in stock, we will normally match the offer (on a 'same product - same price' basis) and still provide you with our normal free delivery. We realise that we are not the only company who will match a competitor's price. However, if you come to us for a price match, you will also be entitled to our after sales service, including free newsletters and technical support. This makes our price match promise rather special, something you will receive **ONLY FROM SILICA**. We don't want you to go anywhere else for your Atari products. So shop at Silica, the UK's No.1 Atari Specialist.

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ATARI 520ST-FM NOW ONLY £260 (+VAT=£299)
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1040ST-F Keyboard Without Monitor £499 (inc VAT)
1040ST-F Keyboard + High Res SM125 Mono Monitor £599 (inc VAT)
If you would like further details of the 1040ST-F, return the coupon below.

MEGA ST's NOW IN STOCK

For the user who requires even more RAM than the 520 or 1040 ST's offer, the new MEGA ST computers are now available. There are two MEGA ST's, one with 2Mb of RAM and the other with a massive 4Mb. Both new computers are fully compatible with existing ST's and run currently available ST software. The MEGA ST's are styled as an expandable Central Processing Unit with open architecture and a detachable keyboard. They are supplied with GEM, a free mouse controller and all extras as with the 520 or 1040. Prices are as follows:
MEGA ST 2Mb Keyboard + CPU £899 (inc VAT)
MEGA ST 2Mb Keyboard + CPU + SM125 Mono Monitor £999 (inc VAT)
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Do you already own a computer
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THE

GAMES

That Launched

AN

Industry

There are stories in every industry which trace massive business empires back to humble beginnings, but few are as diverse or dramatic as the rise and fall...and rise of Atari.

The story begins in the States; the year is 1972. With an initial outlay of \$250, Nolan Bushnell founded a company which he called 'Atari', an expression of victory used in a Japanese board game called Go - similar in intent to the chess term 'check'. The product which formed the basis of the company was a video game called Pong, which was ludicrously simplistic by today's standards, but no less than a phenomenon sixteen years ago. Ironically, this simple bat and ball game was the very rudiment of an entire industry!

The company grew rapidly and in 1975 the annual turnover exceeded \$40 million. Atari was attracting the attention of the business world and, in particular, Warner Communication Incorporated. A massive conglomerate in the 'entertainment' industry, Warner were quick to realize the limitless potential of this new medium. The following year, Warner wooed Atari, negotiated and subsequently bought the company for \$28 million - a relatively cheap price to pay for a company that was at the forefront of a rapidly growing industry.

Atari was just a division in the massive Warner ranks, but no time was wasted in the development of games for the amusement arcades and, on the home consumer sector, the famous VCS game console was designed and introduced on the market in 1977. The VCS package included a game console which connected to the television and two joysticks

to play the games. The software itself was in cartridge format and could be bought separately, initially through catalogues. Concurrently, Warner had established the Atari name as a major force in the arcades with some of the most popular and profitable games in arcade history.

Over the next five years, more than 25 million VCS units were sold, which grossed over \$2 billion. But this phenomenal success only served to highlight what was about to happen in the following year - the big crash! In 1983, losses

of \$533 million were recorded, a vast amount at any level! Many theories have been expressed as to why the debacle of the video game business occurred in the wake of such incredible success, but what exactly caused the downfall has never been satisfactorily clarified. Almost certainly, it was a combination of many contributory factors. Foremost, the public had turned to computers and, in comparison, the games available for the VCS were very simplistic and the graphics noticeably inferior. Additionally, the VCS had no keyboard and would therefore perform no other task than playing games - the importance of buying a computer rather than a 'game machine' was suddenly paramount to the consumer. After five years, the VCS was dubbed a 'heavy fad' item which had served its purpose. Combine these reasons with

Warner's reluctance to respond and adapt to the change, and the resounding crash is not so surprising.

In July 1984, Warner sold certain 'key elements' of the home consumer side of Atari to a new company headed by Jack Tramiel. Warner retained their interest in the arcade sector for a short time, until they sold to Namco who are still in control today. Both Tramiel and Namco kept the name Atari for their respective companies, even though the two concerns were completely separate. As founder of Commo-

dore, Tramiel was experienced in the industry and brought with him a wealth of talent in twenty-five key country managers from Commodore, including his three sons. The immediate response of the new company was to lower the price of the VCS, improve the product and continue with the business. But in the interim period, Nintendo filled the void in the market with their up-dated game console and futuristic gun package. However, at its release, Atari's new VCS, the 2600, could run external software and was a third of the price of the Nintendo.

The Atari XL series of eight-bit computers was introduced under the Warner management and was in direct competition with Commodore. But even with the boast of over 2000 software titles and a considerably lowered price, it was never to reach the popularity of the Commodore 64. Tramiel used his skill to analyse the failing product and the result was the new XE series. The immediate advantages of the XE from a sales point of view, was its updated design, which is similar in appearance to a small ST and it could run the existing vast software library. Additionally, the 64k and 128k computers in the range could cater for new and advanced users alike. As for the game console, a new updated VCS was released as late as 1987. Dubbed as a 'super video game machine' with laser gun, many wondered whether the machine had a legitimate place in Atari's new range -

perhaps it was hoped that it would start another, more carefully controlled fad? Atari still reckon that there is a place in the market for a sophisticated game machine and recently, a slickly designed and commercially appealing XE machine was introduced to take over from the existing series, which had enjoyed modest success. The new XE consists of a

cartridge-based game console and an infrared gun; but with 64k of memory and a QWERTY keyboard, it was expected to upstage both the Nintendo and Sega consoles.

Since the success of the VCS in the late 70's, Atari had always been a major contender in all sectors of the home-consumer market, but had not dominated a particular area. But the good-sense Tramiel management was just beginning to bear fruit. When the ST series was introduced, it was widely reported that, in the intermediate term, it would either make or break Atari. Initially, this self-assured independence was misconstrued by some as arrogance, but even to ardent critics, it soon became blatantly apparent that there were many favourable characteristics to the machine. 'Power Without the Price' is the memorable sales slogan which accompanied the release of the ST series, and the 520 ST is still the cheapest 16-bit machine on the market. Both the 520 and the 1 Meg 1040 are powered by the Motorola 68000 microprocessor and the graphics are infinitely superior to the Intel chip which ran the eight-bit machines. Additionally, the ST implementation which runs at 8MHz is exceptional in terms of speed, graphical quality and colour potential. Combine this with the fact that the machine has been taken to heart by the best software

developers in all fields and you have a series of computers that are good value for money, relative to anything on the market in 1985 and the present day.

Until the Tramiel management took control of the reins and introduced the ST, Atari had always placed software development above advance in hardware, but the ST reversed this policy completely. However, while Atari have concentrated on developing and marketing more machines and peripherals, such as the new PC and the Laser Printer, the software community have responded with a gigantic effort to develop software for the ST and the list now runs into thousands of titles. Under the Tramiel management, skilful marketing has resulted in a range of computers which can cater for everyone. Additionally, Atari have the lowest cost structure in the industry and the most effective worldwide distribution and so it is no surprise to learn that from a loss of \$533 million in 1983, the company is now making a healthy profit, entirely from the machines introduced under the Tramiel management.

But that does not mean that more improvements cannot be made! The President of Atari, Sam Tramiel, expressed his concern about one area: 'The continuing shortage of DRAM has negatively impacted operating margins. We have opted to absorb the additional DRAM costs rather than increase the price of the machines.' (16th May



1988). And, his comments on the first quarter results for 1988: 'Further action is being taken to reduce costs, improve product mix and margin and to increase sales.' The intense monitoring of the hardware business has now been relaxed slightly and so there is some room to develop a sector of the market that has been dormant since 1985. Atari are now concen-

trating on software development and the intention is to re-emerge as a leading force in entertainment software.

Under the Warner management and the subsequent sale to Namco, Atari became the premier game company in the arcade, with titles like Breakout, Asteroids, Missile Command, Pole Position, Championship Sprint, Star Wars, Gauntlet and A.P.B. - the list goes on! Although the arcade and home market divisions are separate, the Atari name is synonymous with quality arcade and home entertainment and this divarication from machine to software development is being treated to the thorough marketing research and monitoring which made the ST a success story. The results of the research are that the end user is no longer a 'Joe Sixpack' in search of budget entertainment. The consumer now expects quality software and according to Atari, that's what they are going to get. With quality arcade software, art packages and graphical adventures expected to be launched in the latter part of this year, Atari is set to dominate the most important sector of the market in every area. By way of an introduction to this re-emergence into software development, Atari have released some of the favourite games from the arcade and eight-bit market.

Moon Patrol

If ever there was a title for a game which failed to inspire, it is this one - and the simplistic graphics do little to impress either! But these factors are mere superficialities as the game-play is uncomplicated but addictive arcade fun. Like the majority of the games in this series, Moon Patrol originated in the arcade and then became a popular title in the VCS range. A basic option-screen allows you to choose between two course levels. The game screen shows a six-wheel lunar vehicle positioned on a ramp. Pressing the firebutton starts the game.

As the vehicle rolls down the ramp, the simple joystick controls are immediately apparent. The screen begins to scroll from right to left and the vehicle trundles across a craggy moon-cape. Forcing the joystick to the right causes the vehicle to accelerate across the screen and the most prolific obstacles throughout the entire game make their presence known immediately. These craters and rocks are a constant concern and as you near a crater, pushing the joystick upwards catapults the vehicle in the air. But the rocks have been strategically positioned on the other side of the craters so as to impede your progress. However, pressing the firebutton activates a front-mounted missile which



eliminates the rocks, although you must make the crucial decision whether to blast the rock before you leap the crater and so risk falling in, or immediately after the jump.

Constant attack from the sky from a variety of alien aircraft make negotiating a safe course across the terrain even more difficult. However, in addition to projecting missiles forward, pressing the firebutton simultaneously activates a vertical machine gun which sprays the sky raiders. The first squadrons of flying saucers fire small missiles directly downwards and are easily avoidable in comparison to the more devastating projectiles emitted from the strange apparitions which join the air assault. These craft spit missiles at an angle in front of the vehicle and cause even more craters.

Once you have progressed from the beginner's level, the advanced course offers all of these hazards and more. Low flying jets chase the lunar vehicle across the terrain and can only be avoided by leaping as the jet comes up behind the vehicle and blasting it as it travels underneath. Additionally, the craters are far more regular and gaping, with gun emplacements firing from the other side.

Comment: Moon Patrol's graphical presentation does little justice to the game-play and its appeal can only be appreciated when played. This is traditional arcade entertainment at its best!



Crystal Castles

Moving Bentley Bear through the Crystal Castles may sound like an infantile pursuit to some ST users, but Atari have never tried to intellectualize arcade games. Crystal Castles is one of the lesser-known games in this series, but its game-play offers no less entertainment value. Drawn in sixty-degree isometric projection, Atari took the traditional multi-level arcade theme and placed it in a 3D environment, while retaining the familiar multi-level, arcade icons. Each level displays a different 3D shape which contains a variety of obstacles and hazards and Bentley must collect all of the gems, which are scattered on the ground, in order to gain as many points as possible. Bonus points can be gained by collecting a pot of honey in each level, while gaining the final gem on the screen before one of Bentley's adversaries claims it promotes you to the succeeding level.

The first screen is a projection of the word 'Atari' and, on this level, giant Crystal Balls roll after Bentley and gobble up his gems as they roll. The delicious honey pot is too tempting for the ravenous bear (and the point-hungry game-player), but as you move Bentley near the pot, a swarm of bees appears to protect the honey. If you fail to reach the honey pot, the enraged swarm

continues to chase Bentley until he collects the final gem. Fortunately, Bentley is gifted with incredible speed and jumping powers which are uncharacteristic for a rather scrawny teddybear and, in turn, you have very responsive control over him with the joystick.

Level two presents 'The Day of the Trifids' as Bentley is confronted by all manner of ferocious foliage which lurch around the screen, badgering the young bear and consuming his gems like a vengeful salad. The first two levels act as an introduction to the game-play, but latter levels introduce ghosts and skeletons which haunt every corner of the screen, as gem guzzlers galore gobble the precious stones. In the face of adversity, poor Bentley has only one chance to overcome his many and varied enemies: he must chase and catch his magic hat. Once the elusive hat is in your possession, Bentley becomes immune to all of his adversaries, but its capture usually results in the loss of many bear lives. But not even Bentley's magic hat can save him from the ultimate terror in Crystalville - the evil witch Bethilda who chases the poor bear with one intention in mind: turning him into bear stew.

Comment: With its main character being a cute little teddybear, you might think that Crystal Castles would be a hit with the kids, but of little appeal to anyone else. But, on the contrary, the game-play is taxing enough to keep even the most zealous game player amused. Graphically, Crystal Castles is perhaps the most attractive game in this series. Combine this with the addictive qualities of multi-level arcade entertainment, and Crystal Castles is a cute game in every respect.

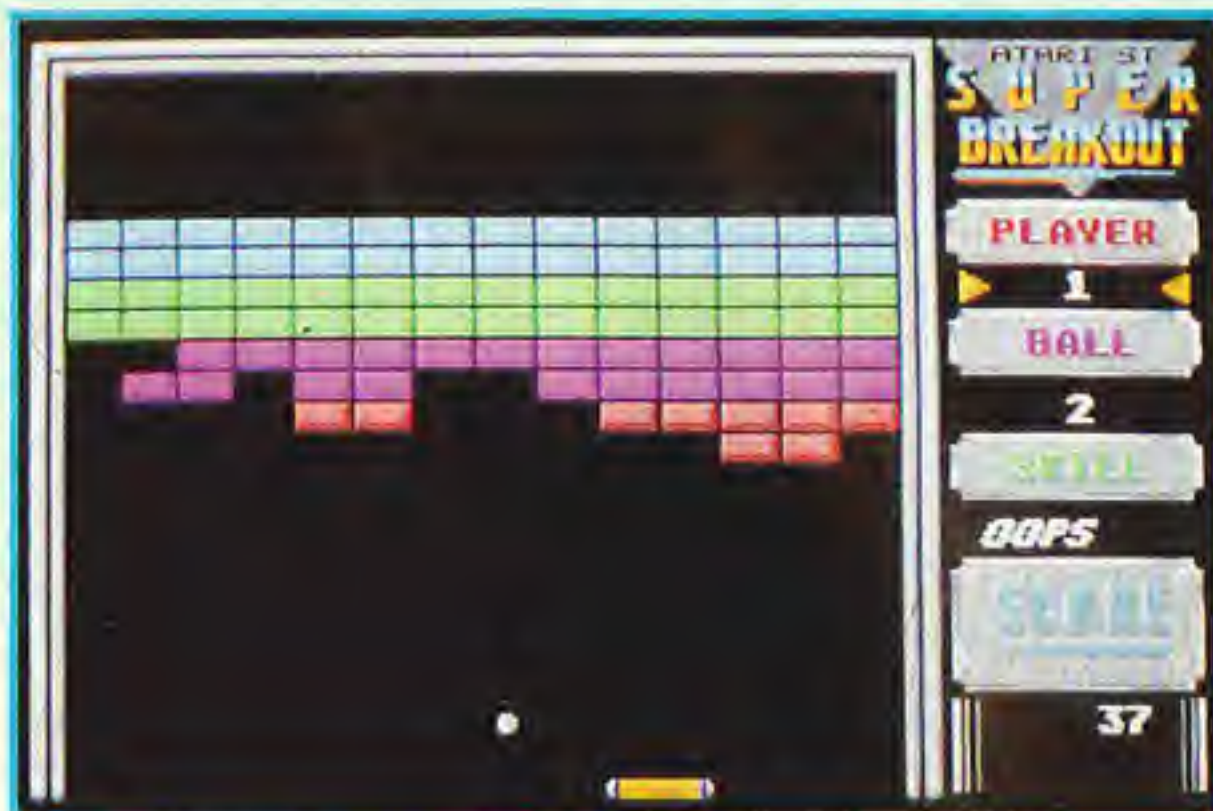


Super Breakout

Can the numerous Breakout clones be justified as variations on an excellent theme of arcade entertainment, or do they demonstrate that certain members of the software industry are often devoid of originality? When Atari introduced Breakout into the arcades over a decade ago, the luxury of coloured graphics was afforded with the aid of coloured strips of plastic which were stuck to the screen to give the effect of multicoloured bricks. Breakout seemed to symbolize the imprisoned capabilities of the computer and as it captured our undivided attention, we slowly broke down the barriers, brick by brick, until the dawn of the space invasion.

Partly from public demand and partly out of respect for this ageing classic, Atari present an updated adaptation called Super Breakout in their range of arcade blockbusters. But thanks to progressive graphic techniques, you won't have to stick coloured plastic to your monitor screen. There are four variations on the theme in Super Breakout which can be selected on the option screen at the start of the game, which include basic Breakout, Cavity, Progressive and Double. Traditionally, Breakout is an excellent multi-player game and in this version, up to eight can take turns to participate.

As an introduction to the basics of brick busting, you could do no better than select the Basic Breakout option. You are presented with a solid wall of multicoloured bricks and a generous bat to intercept the ball. With mouse controls, clicking the button sends the ball from the top of the screen and, moving the bat with



the mouse, the ball must be intercepted before it drops to the bottom of the screen. Initially, the ball travels painfully slowly as you eliminate the first two rows of bricks, but this somnolent pace only serves to emphasize the change in pace which is waiting in the next section of bricks. As the ball hits the third row of bricks, its speed doubles and the pace of the game quickens considerably. Further difficulty presents itself as the ball makes contact with the final row of bricks, where the size of the bat reduces by half. You begin the game with five bats and any losses in the first screen are not replenished in the next.

'Cavity' is thus named because two additional balls are incarcerated within the wall. Once you have penetrated the wall, the balls are released and it is a matter of keeping all three balls in play for as long as possible. 'Progressive' is by far the most difficult level in the game, offering even more frantic brick-busting with regenerating bricks that advance down the screen. In the more difficult levels, you can choose to play with two bats which are fixed together. In theory, what you miss with the first bat you should be able to hit with the second, but in practice this causes more confusion than it's worth.

Comment: With half-a-dozen so-called Breakout clones avail-

able for the ST, which are packed to the cavities with enhanced features such as adhesive bats, why bother with the original? Super Breakout is somehow unspoiled, unpretentious, man and bat against wall. If anyone is justified in enhancing the original, it is Atari!



Battlezone

Moving the Battlezone machine in any amusement arcade would reveal a very clean patch of carpet and those distinctive vector-graphics must be permanently burnt on to the monitor tubes by now. This enduring game was introduced in the arcades when alien-blasting was at the height of its popularity. Atari brought the action down to ground-level by replacing the statutory quick-firing spaceship with a cumbersome tank, and the ST version of the game is, as far as I can recall, identical to the arcade original. As if you are looking from the turret of the tank, the game-screen shows 3D vector-graphic shapes which represent buildings highlighted on a black moonscape, with a mountainous terrain in the background.

The tank is controlled entirely by the joystick, and pushing forwards sends it trundling across the terrain. Redirecting the joystick to the left and right, halts the tank and the turret continues to turn horizontally a full 360 degrees until you centralize the joystick again. As the turret moves, a sweeping radar shows the changing position of the enemy, while a message window indicates whether the enemy tank is to your left, right or within firing range. The enemy tanks come into view at different distances; some appear on the horizon, which forces you to move forwards into firing range, while others emerge from behind buildings with their guns already locked on to you.

As you negotiate a passage across the terrain, the buildings

and objects can be used as cover, but these same buildings can also conceal the enemy tanks. As the turret pans across the terrain, the enemy tanks lurk unseen behind the buildings and wait until you have moved past before emerging and turning their turrets towards you. Warned by the message window that you have passed the enemy tank, you must change the direction of the turret, aim the gunsights at the target and fire a missile. It is a race to see who can aim and fire the quickest and success results in the enemy tank splintering into vector-graphic pieces; failure, however, is a harrowing experience as the missile approaches and smashes the monitor screen indicating rather dramatically that your tank has been destroyed. Eventually, the cumbersome and somewhat obtrusive enemy tanks can be defeated with ease and so star-shaped missiles are introduced into the game. These missiles hurtle across the planet surface from an unseen but accurate source, their task is to divert your attention from the tanks.

Comment: Battlezone's longevity in the arcade is proof that the game is entertaining, but its subsequent popularity in the VCS market confirms this. When Battlezone was created, vector-graphics afforded results which were impossible to achieve with solid graphics and, in this case, it is certainly not detrimental to the game-play.



Missile Command

As this review demonstrates, Atari have attained unprecedented success in the arcades with certain formulas. But that has not dissuaded them from experimenting with new themes and Missile Command is a case in point. Its explosive graphics have been lighting up the determined faces of game-players in the arcades for years. But its longevity is not wholly due to the highly original game-play, as it is reputed to be the first game to adopt the so-called 'control ball' instead of the usual joystick game controls. This tennis ball-sized sphere is set in the arcade machine console and can be rolled in any direction - it certainly proved to be a popular form of control for the game. Naturally, the similarities between the control-ball and mouse-ball action makes the mouse an excellent substitute, and it is for this reason that Missile Command is perhaps the most faithful conversion in this arcade series.

Six buildings at the base of the game-screen must be protected from destruction by ballistic missiles, which drop from the top of the screen and leave a trail behind them. Your weaponry consists of two lasers which are positioned between the buildings



and each of the lasers is limited to only fifteen blasts. Clicking the left or right-hand button activates the corresponding laser and the mouse itself controls a cross-shaped gunsight cursor. Allowing time for your laser to travel to the interception point with the incoming missile and guessing the expected path of the falling projectile, the cursor should be positioned a little way ahead, then clicking either mouse button anchors a small cross on the screen. Immediately, a laser is emitted from the corresponding base, travels to the interception point and explodes and if the fire from the explosion envelopes the very tip of the tracer, its descent is halted.

There are nine levels in the game and, on an option screen at the beginning, you can select to skip any number of screens in order to play a specific one. Additionally, you can vary the ferocity of the attack with optional hazards including the tracers multiplying and fanning out like fingers, or numerous large missiles which drift down and require a direct hit to stop. Additional force comes from satellites and aircraft which fly across screen firing extra laser tracers. At the end of each wave of attack the points are accumulated with bonus ammunition given for economic use of weaponry.

Comment: As described, thanks to the similarities between the control-ball and the mouse, Missile Command is a very faithful interpretation of the arcade original. Again, the graphics are relatively simplistic and uncomplicated, but the game-play is terrific!

Joust

Arcade fans were gripped by Pacmania and Phoenix had just risen from the ashes when Atari released Joust into the arcades. This hybrid game was far removed from the popular arcade pursuits of the day, but its subsequent success proved that it was a welcomed respite from space wars. The game-screen shows six islands of varying size which are suspended in mid-air. These strips of land act as platforms for the extraordinary battle which commences as soon as the knights and their buzzard mounts trot on screen. In the sudden flurry of feathers, you must quickly establish which buzzard is under your control.

The joust is fought with the joystick, but with some unusual variations to the standard controls. When the buzzard has landed on an island or on the bridge which stretches across a molten lava lake at the base of the screen, pushing the joystick to the left or right moves the bird accordingly, while continuously pressing the firebutton flaps the buzzard's wings causing it to take off. Once airborne, the speed at which you press the firebutton regulates the bird's flight. If two players are participating, you can either work as a team against the computer-controlled buzzards or compete against each other.

Engaging in a joust on the ground requires directing the buzzard at the enemy at full trot and, just before the lances collide, pressing the firebutton for some elevation parts the enemy knight cleanly from his mount. Jousting whilst airborne, however, is a combination of continuously pressing the firebutton to keep the bird aloft and avoiding a collision with other air traffic and the islands, as well as ensuring that you are above the enemy at the



crucial point of the joust. If you manage to knock the enemy knight from his buzzard, you are either informed of the point-value of the joust, or the enemy buzzard lays an egg which drops to the bottom of the screen. This egg must be collected for bonus points before it hatches an enemy knight who can mount the next riderless buzzard that comes along. If your buzzard disappears off one side of the screen, it immediately appears on the other side and so you must ensure that you do not collide unfavourably with an enemy buzzard.

Each so-called wave or level of the game introduces an increased presence of enemy, and bonus points are given if you adapt to the suggested method of play. For instance, if two players are participating in level two, bonus points are awarded for teamwork. But as you progress, the molten lava slowly burns the bridge at the base of the screen, which means that the buzzard must be kept in the air or landed on one of the islands in order to rest your firebutton-clicking digit and take stock of the game.

Comment: As described, Joust is a piece of arcade history which has stood the test of time through the arcade, the VCS game console and the eight-bit market. But in its fourth generation of conversion, what does it have to offer sixteen-bit users? If Joust was released as a new game today, it would still be considered highly original and it is certainly excellent for two-player participation.

Star Raiders

Star Raiders has arrived on the ST market via the VCS console and eight-bit route, which is an excellent testing ground for the long-term appeal of a game. You may still have that free copy of Megaroids which came with your ST, because with asteroid bombardment and speedy hyperspace facility, Star Raiders could be described as a cockpit view of that game. There are four levels of progressive difficulty which are indicated by star fleet command ranks for added authenticity. Selecting your rank from the four available, the mission begins in outerspace.

To help with navigation, the galaxy has been segmented into Quadrants and a sort of outerspace Ordnance Survey map is housed in the instrumentation console. This pinpoints quadrants with a high presence of asteroids and enemy space craft and also shows the position of your star bases. The mission begins in the volatile Katsauri Quadrant and the task is to locate a starbase which is under attack. Through the so-called Battle Window, distant star fields light up the black void of space and a numeric Head-Up Display enables you to plot the given coordinates to the distressed starbase. Pressing the 'L' activates a long-range scanner and you can set a course to the nearest squadron of alien marauders.

As the 'Zycroid' squadron appear through the Battle Window, pressing the firebutton activates the weaponry and a missile disappears into space. Outnumbered by ten to one, the alien craft move into firing range and rapid fire is required to dispatch as many missiles into their swelling ranks in order to make the odds more equal. These variform craft surround the ship and pressing the 'A' key shows an Aft Scanner which enables you to see the attack from behind and the weaponry can be fired from the rear of the craft. If the ship sustains a hit, a Shield Status light flashes to indicate shield damage, and as the Zycroid craft continue to swarm, the best tactic is to press the 'H' key to activate Hyperwarp. With a swirling of stars, the craft moves far away from the troubled Quadrant, but as you slow down, there is a great chance of colliding with an asteroid belt. In relative safety you can refer to the Galactic map and set course for more action.

Comment: Cockpit-view shoot'em-ups always seem to induce in-



volved participation, and Star Raiders is no exception. As described, there is more to the game-play than alien blasting - navigation also plays a major part. There are also elements of battle strategy as you often have to retreat and lose a battle in order to stay in the game - great fun!

To Sum Up...

Game	Difficulty	Price	
Battlezone	AVE/HARD	£14.99	Slough, Berkshire. Atari House, Atari Corp, Railway Terrace, For further details contact:
Crystal Castles	AVERAGE	£14.99	
Joust	AVE/HARD	£14.99	
Missile Command	AVERAGE	£14.99	
Moon Patrol	AVERAGE	£14.99	
Star Raiders	AVERAGE	£14.99	
Super Breakout	HARD	£14.99	

Game	Graphics	Sound	Addictiveness	Overall
Battlezone	60%	48%	61%	61%
Crystal Castles	60%	43%	53%	54%
Joust	61%	43%	64%	59%
Missile Command	55%	28%	55%	55%
Moon Patrol	47%	43%	52%	50%
Star Raiders	55%	38%	57%	53%
Super Breakout	44%	15%	48%	46%

Nudging the red line

WIN a day out for two at this year's British Motorcycle Grand Prix and 25 Runners Up prizes of EXCLUSIVE posters celebrating the race.

WIN a fabulous, all expenses paid, day out for two at this year's British Motorcycle Grand Prix. Taking place at Castle Donnington circuit on Sunday 7 August, the race is being sponsored by Pepsi. *Electric Dreams* will pay for travel to and from the race for you and your partner and entertain you during the day at Donnington. Pepsi are joining forces with *Electric Dreams* to promote the Super Hang-On game and the winners of this competition will have a chance to meet the Pepsi Team Suzuki riders, Rob McElnea (GB) and Kevin Schwantz (US). For each of the 25 runners-up there will be an **EXCLUSIVE** poster from Pepsi promoting the 1988 British Motorcycle Grand Prix.

URGENT! Due to the short time that is available between the time *ST Action* hits the streets and the date of the Grand Prix, **SPECIAL RULES APPLY.** *Electric Dreams* need to know the name of the winner by the 25 JULY. Therefore, the first **FIFTY** correct entries through the post will be put into the hat and the winner will be drawn. After that, every correct entry received will then be held until the closing date for the runner-up prizes of 15 August, when the 25 poster winners will be picked. So, if you want to stand a chance of winning the trip to the Grand Prix, then answer the questions below (they will be easy if you have read carefully so far) and send them off **TODAY** to the usual *ST Action* address.

REMEMBER - If you are to stand a chance of winning the day out at Donnington, then send in your entry **IMMEDIATELY.** Time is of the essence.

Questions:

1 - Where is this year's British Motorcycle Grand Prix being held?

Is it:

- a) Silverstone b) Castle Donnington
c) Hammersmith Odeon d) Brands Hatch

2 - Who is the British rider racing for Pepsi Team Suzuki?

Is it:

- a) Barry Sheen b) Murray Walker
c) Rob McElnea d) Harry Enfield



with Electric Dreams



1 The British Motorcycle Grand Prix is being held at :

2 The British rider for Pepsi Team Suzuki is :

Name

Address

.....

.....

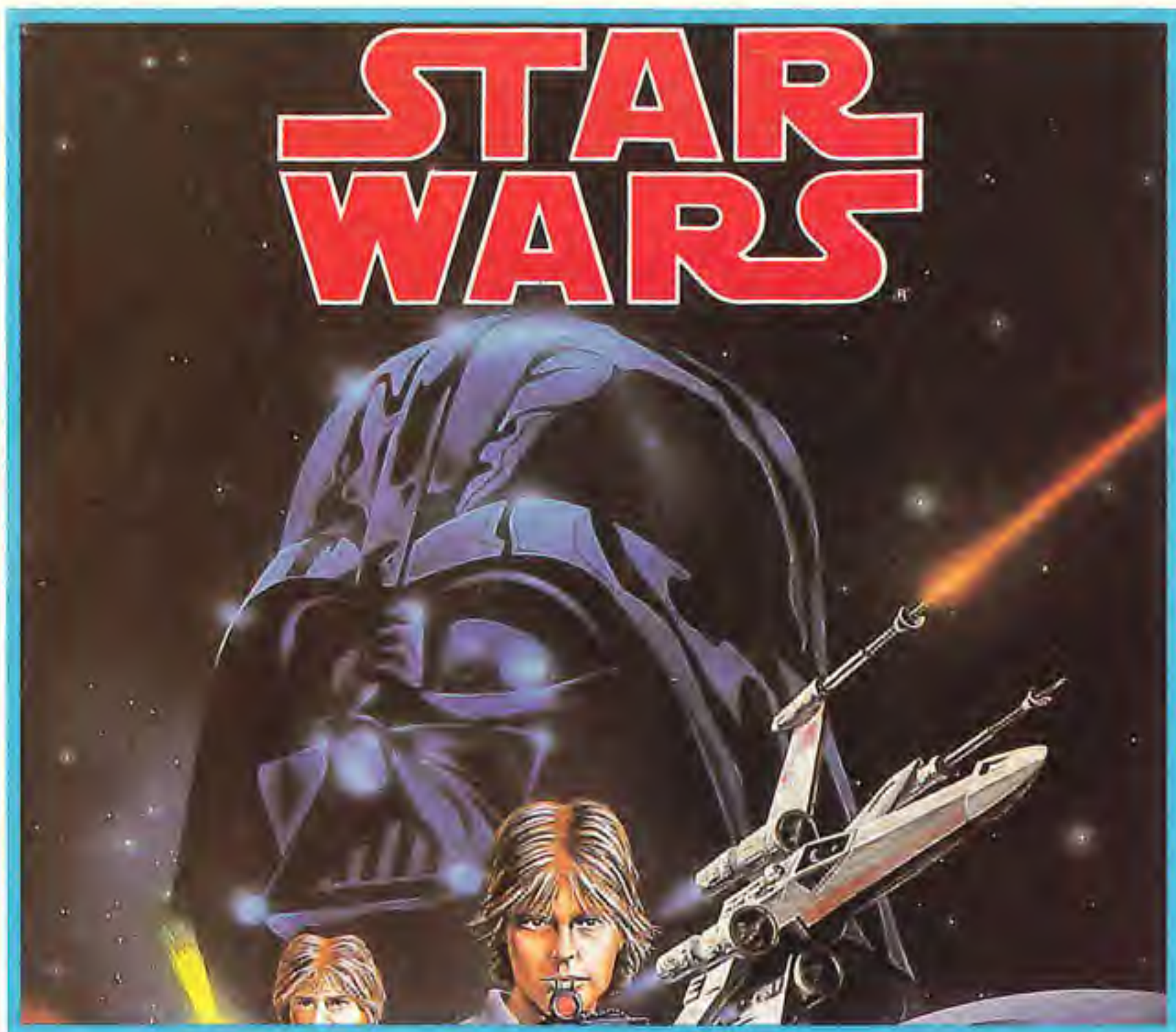
Post code

Daytime telephone number

ST Action Competition Rules:
The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding competitions or the results of competitions. All prizes are offered believing them to be available. If, however, a prize is unavailable we reserve the right to substitute an alternative of comparable value. No cash alternatives will be given. Results will be published as soon as possible and prizes despatched as quickly as possible. Please refrain from phoning regarding competition results or prize delivery. Employees of Gollner Publishing Ltd and companies participating in competitions are not eligible to enter.

Send entry to:
Electric Dreams Competition,
ST Action,
10 Theatre Lane
Chichester,
West Sussex
PO19 1SR

MARK DOOD



Think of Domark and most people instantly think of 'name' games, such as, Star Wars, Live and Let Die, Living Daylights, etc. Ask people about the image they project, and bow-ties, stripey shirts and straw hats spring to mind. When he visited the Domark offices in London, however, Martin Moth found a lot more to Domark than bow-ties and fancy game titles.

I met Mark Strachan, one half of the Domark partnership, at their offices in Wimbledon. Unfortunately, Dominic Wheatley was away and so I confined my enquiries to Mark. We got chatting initially about the Star Wars game that has proved to be such a hit with ST owners, as well as other formats. I asked whether the licence came first or the game. Mark replied that, at the time, they were looking around for a new licence and were offered quite a few but were unable to match the big-time money that the likes of U.S. Gold and Ocean had to spend on licences to convert arcade games to the home micro market.

However, they were offered the licence to the Lucas films: Star Wars, Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi. At the time, the arcade version of Star Wars was nearly five years old and many people in the industry also thought

that the films were out of date and not in the public eye and that, correspondingly, the games would not have any appeal to the mass market. Therefore, the price of the deal was considerably lower than other arcade licences. Domark saw the potential for the game and bought the licence. They then commissioned Vektor Grafix to write the game as close to the arcade



Dominic Wheatley (left) and Mark Strachan about to get run over by a very sinister looking car

verion as possible and the rest, as they say, is history, with, to date, over 150,000 copies being sold.

The main reason for its success is undoubtedly its playability factor. It

really is a game that can be picked up at any time and played for quite a while before your interest tails off. Mark agreed: 'One thing that we have learnt since being in the business is that no matter how much publicity and 'big-name' treatment you give a game, if the game itself is poor then it will flop.' I asked if he had produced any 'flops'. 'Oh! Good heavens, yes. We produced two games that just turned belly-up and died. A View to a Kill and Friday 13th were real no-no's and simply vanished into oblivion. Still, we've learnt a lot since those early days.'

It seemed a good point at which to find out about the Domark history. As most people know, Domark is the mixing of the two Managing Directors' names, Dominic and Mark. However, we're jumping ahead of ourselves, so I'll let Mark take up the story.

'Dominic and I were both working in an advertising agency in 1983 and were watching the home computer scene grow rapidly. It seemed to us at the time that no matter what the software houses released onto the market, the games would sell like hot cakes. We thought that if we released some decent games onto the market, then they would sell well. We left the ad agency in '84 and set up our own software company. We originally thought of 'Domark' but thought that nobody makes up a company title out of people's names, so we tried others. One that we came up with was 'Swift', which stood for 'Strachan

Wheatley Independent Future Technologies'! Quite sensibly, we ditched that one as it would have taken us a week to answer the 'phone. We eventually came back to Domark, and that was that.'

'The first game we released was 'Eureka!'. This game was a sort of computerised treasure hunt, with clues given in the game and in the accompanying booklet. People then had to decipher the clues to end up with a telephone number. The first person to ring this number won £25,000. The game worked well and was well publicised, with adverts even appearing in the Sunday Times.

From there we went on to produce A View To A Kill and Friday 13th. At the time, although we knew what we wanted, we did not go about things in the right way and ended up with two really bum products. That really knocked us down and for a while we found it difficult to keep ourselves afloat. However, we picked ourselves up, learnt from our mistakes and brought in Paul Holmes, who used to be with Elite, to be our software manager. We then released a great game called Split Personality, a puzzle-type game involving pictures of famous people. Trivial Pursuit was our next release and that was a really important game for us, as

we drastically needed something to bring us back to being a credible name in the industry. This game did it for us and turned out to be hugely successful with, oh, 'loads' games being sold. Well over 300,000, anyway!

After that came The Living Daylights and Star Wars, with TV Games fitting in somewhere along the

THE DOMARK COLLECTION



within Domark, as all of their games are contracted out. As Mark sees it, this arrangement has quite a few advantages. If a software development company is contracted to do a game, then the programmers will be more keen to produce a good version that

sells well if they are to get a royalty on all games sold. It also saves employing and finding space for a group of programmers. He can understand companies, such as, U.S. Gold and Ocean having in-house programmers, but they release a vast amount of software and the programmers justify their position. However, at Domark, they

release very few games but ensure that they are of sufficient quality to sell well for a long time.

I enquired as to why Domark have adopted the policy of only releasing games with well-known titles, such as Star Wars, Live and Let Die, Trivial Pursuit et al. Mark countered with a few questions of his own.

'Do people know who James Bond is? Can they identify with him? Do they realise what he represents, i.e. fast living, danger, excitement, thrills and spills?' Having answered in the affirmative to all these questions, he then threw another at me: 'If they see a computer game with James Bond on the packaging, would they make the connection that the game will be an extension of the James Bond theme, i.e. action and excitement, and therefore be more more likely to buy it than the game sitting next to it on the shelf with 'Bill Bloggs Blatts the Blue-eyed Bumble-bees'?' Again I answered with a yes.

'That's what we thought when we set up Domark. Our decision to market games with a well-known title has been borne out by the growth of Domark to our current position in the industry. One reason behind the strategy was that with so many games on the software shelves of shops these days, the poor kid is often overwhelmed by all the varying titles and glossy packaging. If, in amongst all the other titles, he happens to spot, say, The Living Daylights, then he will probably be more attracted to that



line. At the moment, games that are 'in the pipeline' are Live and Let Die, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi.

The company have expanded so that there are now twelve people that make up the Domark of today. Mark and Dominic are the Joint Managing Directors, Paul and Dave are responsible for software development, Lizzie is

PA to Dominic and Mark, Bev and Julie work in production, Linda is the receptionist, Roy deals with customer enquiries, Jeremy is the accountant and Anthony and Anne are aides to Jeremy.

There are no programmers

game since he recognises the Bond movie title and has possibly even seen the film. It is reasonable to assume that for an impulse buy he will be more likely to place his faith in a name that he knows than in any old game title that he has never heard of before.

Staying with the Bond name, it also has other advantages in that the people in Domark are naturally more enthusiastic to promote a product that has a glossy and exciting image associated with it. This carries over to magazines because they are trying to get good, interesting articles and often require



plenty of pictures to go with the article to brighten it up for the reader. After all, no-one likes to read a magazine with page after page of text and very few pictures.

With the Bond theme, of course, we can supply pictures taken from the actual Bond film as well as game shots and these naturally add more colour, action and glamour to the magazine, so it works well for everyone concerned. It also helps to sell the product on the shelf as it is much easier to produce point-of-sale posters, leaflets, etc.. We produce a good game with a well-known name, we get good publicity and the game sells well. The only other vitally important detail to get right, of course, is to ensure that the software is up to scratch. If there is one thing guaranteed to destroy high-profile companies such as ourselves, it is one or two bad games.'

I enquired as to what the future held for Domark. Expansion was the keyword here. Mark expects Domark to be in the same league as Ocean and Activision in a couple of year's time. When asked whether he would want Domark to be that large, he thought that, although there would be definite benefits, one of the most important things about Domark, the fact that the whole company has a personal feel to it, would probably be lost or, at least, be more difficult to maintain. 'I'll cross that bridge when I come to it'...

As to non-software projects, Mark is putting the final touches to a

series of cassette tapes with a difference. Instead of software or music recorded on them, they will feature road tests of cars. One of the tapes I listened to was of Stirling Moss test-driving a Ferrari Testarossa, Aston

Martin Zagato, Lamborghini Countach and Porsche 911 Turbo SE around the Donnington race circuit. (If you are an avid car enthusiast then you will find the last sentence vaguely familiar. In fact, one of the major car magazines came down to Donnington on the same day as Domark had arranged for Stirling to test the cars, and then proceeded

to do a front cover feature on the four cars and Stirling. As Mark said, they printed a small apology to Domark in the next issue but what compensation is that for a day that cost nearly £4,000 whilst the car mag gets a cover story and about four or five pages of free copy? Still, you live and learn.)

Stirling gives his thoughts on the cars and their handling whilst lapping the track in the various cars and, listening to the tape as I drove away from the interview, I found it most enjoyable. Further tests include hot hatchbacks, saloon cars and maybe even some classic cars. Priced at around £3 each, they will soon be available in service stations across the country.

In bringing the interview to a conclusion, I noted the energy that seemed to pervade the entire office. It was as though the excitement and action portrayed in the posters scattered around the office walls of various James Bond films had rubbed off on the employees of Domark.

The Domark team are just that: one group of people all pulling together to make the products that, at the end of the day, are just that little bit special. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all at Domark, especially Mark Strachan, for making my visit as enjoyable as possible.

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DOMARK

GIVING THE GAME AWAY

Hello, once again, and welcome to this, the fourth of the "Giving the game away" section. The response this month doubled that of last month.

Thanks very much and keep it pouring in. Anyway, enough of this old blarney, and on with the show...

Ninja Mission - Mastertronic

If you are still playing this aging beat'em-up then Danny Esposito, from Sheffield, can help you in your quest with this useful cheat. Whilst playing, on entering a room, push the joystick in the direction of the enemy and hold down the firebutton. This will freeze them, making them easy meat to beat up!



Carrier Command - Rainbird

Stephen Armstrong has flown in with a very useful bug for this brilliant strategy/sim which seems to be keeping so many of you busy.

Whilst in the Walrus arming section, select nine Harbinger surface-to-surface missiles and put them in the AAV. Select the Avatar Chemical Laser and place it over the missiles. Then select the pod you want (ACCB, Virus Bomb, Fuel) and place it in the AAV. Then when you have launched the AAV look at its weapons and you will find you have BOTH missiles and a laser! On returning to the carrier any missiles you have left will be added to the ship's stores. Carry on doing this and hundreds of missiles can be yours.

For those of you who find Carrier Command just a little bit too taxing, Mark Lawrence has discovered a great in-built cheat routine - this is how you get to it: go into the pause mode and type "GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME" (including spaces). You should now see the message 'Cheat mode active' displayed.

Pressing the + key on the numeric pad protects your Mantas and AAVs from missile attacks. The - key can be used to turn this off. With the cheat mode active, pressing the following keys in sequence: 'Help', Q, S, Control, Alternate, gives a little message. Pressing the 9 key on the numeric key pad displays the current difficulty level, and the keys 6 and 8 have some other effect. Returning to the title screen, press the + and - keys to view all of the objects within the game.

Pink Panther - Gremlin

If you bought this appalling game, and you have my condolences, Andy Brightmore, who hails from Clwyd, has found a bug which may help you squeeze another five minutes enjoyment from it. On level one place a trampoline next to a wall, this will cause the sleepwalker to bounce up-hitting the ceiling and die.

Start a new game and this time you won't have to worry about the sleepwalker as he will just disappear under the floor!



Starquake - Mandarin

This game is absolutely brilliant and rates in my all-time top ten faves. The mysterious "Brod" from Hull and Darren Gallagher from Liverpool have sent in all the transporter codes. This makes progress that little bit easier.

ADKEA	HINDI	TABET
KWANG	ROKEA	SOLUN
CWORE	KALED	DAVRO
BORNO	TSOIN	FLIED
NICHA	LUANG	CHING
SOCHI		



Out Run - U.S. Gold

Bless my barnacles! Those salty, saucy sea-dogs "The Portland Bill Lighthouse Crew", from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, along with Andy Slough, from Welling, Kent, AND our old friend "Norm" Tierney, from London, have sailed in with this brilliant cheat code for this excellent arcade conversion. Whilst playing, type in the word STARION and then press the following keys:

B - Bogus extended play
D - Save screen picture
Q - Programmers information

S - Advances you on a stage
T - Extra 10 seconds
X - Exits game



Bubble Bobble - Firebird

Another of my all-time favourites. Apparently a massive score can be accumulated whilst on screen one. All you have to do is bubble the first two monsters, and then try to fill the screen with bubbles. Bubble and burst the remaining

monster and the remaining bubbles should turn into fruit (usually bananas) each of which is worth 500 points. Thanks to Terry White of Worksop for that useful little tip. Rumour has it that this cheat works on several other screens!

Star Trek - Firebird

Jason Pycroft from South Glamorgan, has sent in this list of objects and their whereabouts, which should aid anyone still "boldly going where no man has gone before..."

CYCLOX EMITTER (For Security Bomb): Numux III (91.59.32) Local zone.

DATABANK CONSOLE (Need ZMX device): Mines II (34.64.79) Reg. zone.

FLUOX CANNISTER (For door): Nornal II (68.67.34) Local zone.

HOT SHOT GENERATOR: Tezion III (66.45.19) Reg. zone.

KLINGON ADMIRAL: Xuziol I (72.47.44) Local zone. (You will need 2 Sona Emitters, 1 Cyclox emitter and a Tachyon gun.)

KLINGON JAMMING DEVICE: Culun IV (19.71.61) Local zone.

LOGIC EMITTER: Tozox II (41.46.17) Quar. zone.

QUIZZING TRIGGER: Numux III (91.59.32) Local zone.

ROMULAN JAMMING DEVICE: Larmos I (83.60.37) Reg. zone.

SOLAR SCAN DEVICE: Sonax III (86.64.41) Reg. zone.

SOMA EMITTERS: 1. Xuxiax V. Quar. zone 2. Mokak II. Nr. Sines.

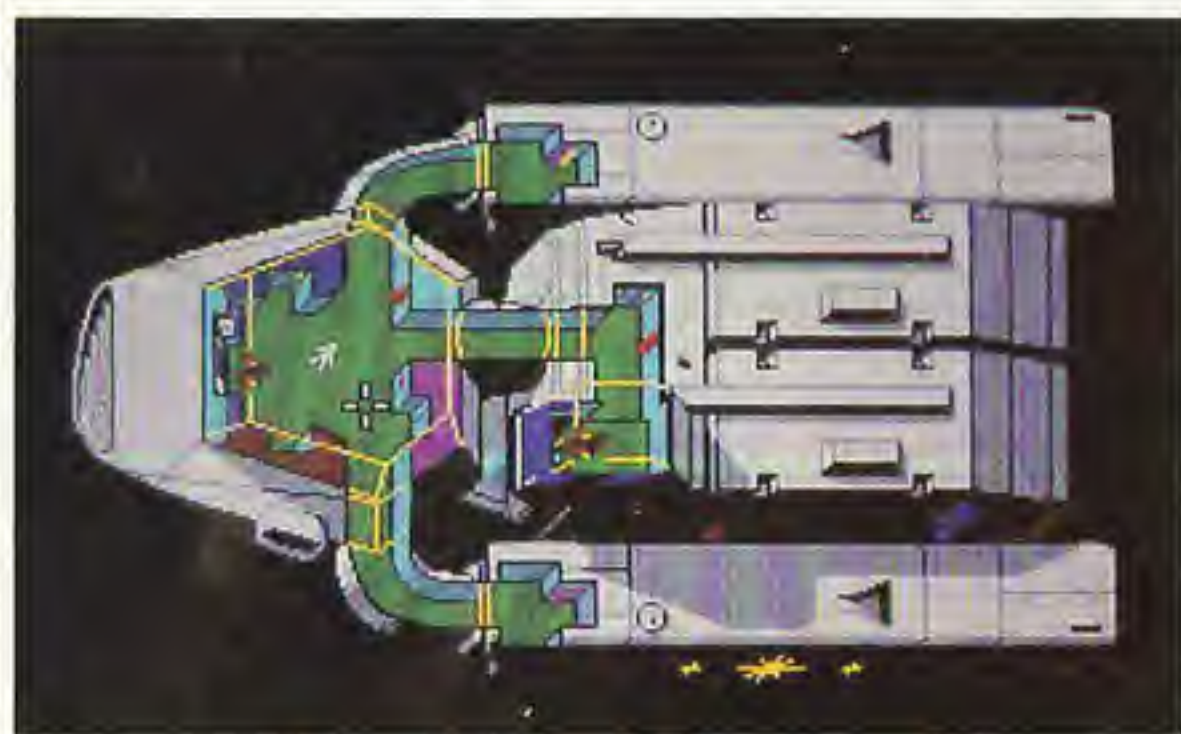
TACHYON GUN: Hezior near Tozox. Goto planet furthest right (Reg. zone) and turn to local zone.



Hardball - Accolade

This is a very tricky game to master. If you are still having problems then these guidelines from Andy L. of Rainhill, Mersyside, should help:

- Allstars are better than Champs.
- Only steal if you actually hit the ball.
- Try to get a lot of runs in early, as the computer team improves towards the end.
- Bunting rarely works.
- Halfway through the match, swap Laws for Wells and Wratten for Harris.
- The best pitchers are Oliver, Perez, Leary, Cook. The others will only be successful for a short while.
- Never pitch fastballs to the centre as they will usually result in home runs.
- Change pitcher after a few innings, because as they get tired their accuracy and speed get worse.



Sundog - Mirrorsoft

I must confess to having not played this adventure yet, though someone who has is Ling Li from Zummerzet, sorry, Somerset, who has found this useful bug. Apparently, you can get shields for 350 Cr to 400 Cr, depending where you are. To get them, go to a weapon store and click on the rapid heal and then click on the "Yes", then instead of clicking on the rapid heal, go right of it, so you are on a blank space. Click now and you will have found a shield which you didn't have before in one of your carrying squares. Though it only says "Shield", after one hit it will say "Shield (7)".

Trantor - Go!

As well as sending in his Starquake codes, Darren Gallagher, from Liverpool, has sent in the following codes for all you last stormtroopers out there:

Computer, Terminal, Portable, Software, Graphics, Assembly, Language, Compiler, Keyboard, Operator, Sequence, Schedule, Personal, Digitise, Database, and Hardware.



Thrust - Silverbird

Here is a useful cheat from Simon Mayoh, from Dumfries in Bonny Scotland for all you out there who enjoy thrusting.

Insert a disk like ST basic to force GEM to appear, then insert your Thrust disk and get a catalogue of its contents. On the disk you will find, amongst others, a game editor and a cheat mode. On loading the cheat version the game seems to play as normal. But if you press the ESC key, instead of aborting the present game, you will advance a level until level 80.

Defender of the Crown

A small tip for this medieval classic from Martin Aston of Blurton (!). When buying soldier, knights etc. you needn't bother buying a catapult because when you seige a castle you are automatically given one!

Terramex - Grandslam

Bleugh! Mediocrity at its best. Guy Thompson, from Oxford, along with James Wimble, from Abbey Wood, London, must like it though, as they have sent in some tips to help all you fellow sufferers out there.

- Henri Beaucoup or Wilbur Fortisque-Smithe are the best characters.
- Henri's key item is the Unicycle whilst Wilbur's is the Cricket ball.
- These key items are used in gaining the secret formula. Wu-Pong must give the flash, Herr Krusche the beer barrel, and Big John Caine the spurs.
- To pass the snakes use the flute.
- To use the balloon carry the bellows.
- To pass a chasm use the Acme expanding bridge.
- To be fired from the cannon use the large Gunpowder barrel and walk into the end of the cannon.
- To get the silver cross you must get the silver lining, take this to the anvil and, voila!
- Make sure you activate the Matter-transporters before you use them or you will be vaporised. You activate them by carrying the green energy crystal (from the low-gravity room) over the gold tray.
- Place the switch in the grey circular holder to activate the ferrying device.
- If you are stuck use the think command.



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Captain Blood - Infogrammes

This is an incredibly absorbing game. Though not many of you lot seem to have been playing it, judging by the amount of tips I've been receiving. Anyway, Robert Lay from Sutton Coldfield has sent in these useful pointers.

At the start of a game you will automatically be in orbit around an alien planet. Transport down and try to find an alien, preferably Yuko; if it isn't Yuko it may be best to reload as he is the key to the game.

Talk to Yuko about his father, Maxon, and you will find he is in prison. He will also give you co-ordinates for Croolis-ulv, where you will find another alien.

Whilst you are talking to Yuko he will give you the code 1010; this always remains the same.

Go to Croolis-ulv and you will be given the co-ordinates for Croonis-var. Go there and destroy it, then go back to Croonis-ulv. The alien will now be nice to you; keep talking to him and you will get the co-ordinates for the



Forbidden planet.

Go to the Forbidden planet (Sincox), and you will meet a guardian robot. Give him the code you received from Yuko. Now watch what happens!



Foundations Waste - Exocet

Hoorah! Steve P. from Hull has been slogging away on this nifty debut release from Exocet. Steve, it seems, is a bit of a dab hand at this, probably due to the fact that he played it solidly for two weeks. Right, here's the lowdown:

Familiarise yourself with the alien attack patterns on each of the four levels. These patterns do not change, so it is possible to shoot the aliens before they actually appear on the screen.

The homing missile is the single most devastating weapon you can get. Once armed with these, don't collect the side-shooting missiles, because, if you do, you will lose the homing missiles. Be quick when collecting extra weaponry because, after a while, they will turn into enemy silos; these are invisible to your homing missiles and must be shot from beneath with your ship's firepower.

The motherships must be destroyed with continuous firepower. Homing missiles are especially useful for speedy destruction. At the end of level 1 two motherships appear:

i. Position your ship directly beneath the mothership and use continuous firing, scrolling with the mothership down the screen, being careful to avoid its missiles.

ii. For the second mothership, position your ship alongside it, just above where the missiles are launched from. Being this close to it means that with your homing missiles, it shouldn't take long to kill. Each mothership is worth 5000 points.

Level two has more motherships, but to aid your quest you can acquire a drone which when positioned on the mothership will reduce it to dust. This tactic can be used until the drone disappears. When that happens, go back to the method of placing your craft alongside the motherships.

Level three is the hardest. Steve recommends that you minimise your losses by avoiding any firepower and taking no risks at all.

On destroying an installation, silo, alien etc. the blue stars they yield are worth the following items - Laser fire, Shields for a limited time, Reverse controls (a real nuisance), and slow motion for a limited time. Though, generally, once you collect the homing missiles it is best to leave any blue stars, especially if you collect the slow motion or reverse control, both of which usually costing you a life.

Level four starts off fairly tame compared to level three, until the last quarter. Possession of the homing missiles until the very last part of the level is absolutely essential to finish the game. Keep your ship centrally positioned as much as possible; the homing missiles will then have maximum effect and speed. The fun starts when you leave the planet and go into space, loss of the homing missiles here is fatal. If you do still have the homing missiles, try to keep them as long as possible. After a multitude of different aliens, you come across the mega-mothership which fires homing missiles at you. These cannot be avoided! Any blue stars that appear just before this point should be taken to try to get a shield. If you are in possession of a shield, then position your craft on the mothership and blast it continuously. After a while it will flash and explode; this still leaves the rear half to destroy but multiple hits will do the trick. After that you can put your feet up, assured that, once again, the galaxy is safe! Ahhhh!!!!

Leatherneck - Microdeal

Not content with his usual plethora of pokes, Mark Lawrence has sent in this cheat mode for this meaty "Commando" variant. Type in CUTHBERTNECK" and then press F3; this will give your men protective shields. The only thing that kills you is your team-mate's bullets. F3 turns it off again.



Addictaball - Alligata

Before you press space, type IJC and the screen will turn black. Now press the function key corresponding to the level you wish to start on. Thanks for that little gem go to Paul Davies from Peterborough.

More Prizes

In our infinite generosity, we can now give away TWO prizes!! So the two lucky winners are Robert Lay, for his Captain Blood tips, and Steve P for his Foundations Waste info. Ta-ra for now and see you next month. STEVE.

P.S. I must just say thanks to Richard Dickens from London for his Xenon poke. Sorry, Richard, but by the time I received yours, Mark Lawrence's had been in the office quite a while, but please try again.

THE AWESOME ST ACTION POKES SECTION INCLUDING: GOLDRUNNER II, BUGGY BOY, LEATHERNECK AND WASTE

Another exciting crop of pokes from [Mark Lawrence](#) this month. This time it's your chance to excel at: Goldrunner 2, Buggy Boy, Leatherneck and Foundations Waste and in case you've missed it, we've included the master cheat routines first published last month. This means that if you've already typed-in the master cheat program, you only have to add a few extra lines to the bottom of it in order to get the poke routine working.

All of these cheats are used in the same way: type-in the program, insert a blank floppy into your disk drive, run the cheat program, then exit to the desktop and run the small .PRG file which should have appeared. This will ask you to insert the game boot disk and press a key. Do this and the game should load and run with the cheat installed. Simple really!

The Goldrunner 2 and Foundations Waste pokes give infinite lives. There are two Buggy Boy pokes, one gives infinite time, while the other allows you to specify your own time limit. The Leatherneck poke gives infinite ammunition, but you can still get killed - this makes the game a little more comfortable to play, without making it too easy, which the built-in cheat mode does (see cheats section this issue).

Next month we'll have another good selection of pokes 'n cheats from [Mark](#).

Universal Cheat Routine for ST Basic

```
20  OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(128):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30  DEF SEG=0: REM Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40  X=CHEAT:READ B
50  WHILE B<>99999
60  POKE X,B:X=X+2
70  READ B
80  WEND
90  REM This code is common to all cheat routines. Type in this listing
100 REM and save it for future use. To use a cheat routine replace the
110 REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.
120 DATA &h601a,&h0000,&h00e4,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000
130 DATA &h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&hffff,&h4ffa,&h01fe
140 DATA &h2f3c,&h0000,&h0300,&h487a,&hfef4,&h4267,&h3f3c,&h004a
150 DATA &h4e41,&h4fef,&h000c,&h487a,&h0064,&h3f3c,&h0009,&h4e41
160 DATA &h5c8f,&h3f3c,&h0007,&h4e41,&h548f,&h4267,&h487a,&h004a
170 DATA &h3f3c,&h004e,&h4e41,&h41fa,&h0068,&h3018,&hc0fc,&h0006
180 DATA &hd1c0,&h487a,&h0037,&h487a,&h0033,&h2f08,&h2f3c,&h004b
190 DATA &h0003,&h4e41,&h4ff9,&h0007,&h7ff0,&h2f40,&h0004,&h2240
200 DATA &h43e9,&h0100,&h41fa,&h003a,&h3018,&h5340,&h2458,&hd5c9
210 DATA &h3498,&h51c8,&hfff8,&h4ed1,&h2a2e,&h2a00,&h1b45,&h496e
220 DATA &h7365,&h7274,&h2067,&h616d,&h6520,&h6469,&h736b,&h2061
230 DATA &h6e64,&h2070,&h7265,&h7373,&h2061,&h206b,&h6579,&h0000
240 REM *****
250 REM The following code is game specific. These are the lines
260 REM of code that must be altered to provide cheats for
270 REM different games.
```

ST BASIC Cheat data - Infinite time for BUGGY BOY

```
310 DATA 1,0,4588,&h4A50
320 DATA &H6275,&H6767,&H7962,&H6F79,&H2E70,&H7267,0,99999
460 BSAVE "BUGGYCHT.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

ST BASIC Cheat data - Set time for BUGGY BOY

```
292 REM Change value 100 below to set time.
310 DATA 1,0,1268,100
320 DATA &H6275,&H6767,&H7962,&H6F79,&H2E70,&H7267,0,99999
460 BSAVE "BUGGYT.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

ST BASIC Cheat data - Infinite lives for FOUNDATIONS WASTE

```
310 DATA 1,0,&H2A22,0
320 DATA &H7761,&H7374,&H652E,&H7072,&H6700,99999
460 BSAVE "FWCHT.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

ST BASIC Cheat data - Infinite ammunition for LEATHERNECK

```
310 DATA 3,0,&H45E0,&H4A6C,0,&H460A,&H4A6C,0,&H4632,&H4A6C
320 DATA &H6175,&H746F,&H5C6C,&H2E70,&H7267,0,99999
460 BSAVE "LEATHCHT.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

ST BASIC Program - Infinite Lives for Goldrunner II

```
10  REM Infinite lives for Goldrunner II. ST Basic version This poke cannot be used with the universal
14  REM cheat routine, and, therefore, must be typed in on its own. To use,type in this listing, place
20  REM a blank disk in drive A and RUN. To use, double click on file GOLD2.PRG and when disk stops insert
40  REM game disk. GOLDRUNNER II should now load as per usual but with infinite lives installed.
50  OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(128):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
60  DEF SEG=0: REM Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
70  FOR X=CHEAT TO CHEAT+88 STEP 2
80  READ B: POKE X,B
100 NEXT X
110 BSAVE "GOLD2.PRG",CHEAT,256
130 DATA &H601A,&H0000,&H00E4,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000,&H0000
140 DATA &H0000,&HFFFF,&H3F3C,&H0007,&H4E41,&H42A7,&H3F3C,&H0020,&H4E41,&H41FA,&HFFF0,&H21C8
150 DATA &H0432,&H49F9,&H0007,&H0000,&H7001,&H3F00,&H42A7,&H2F00
160 DATA &H42A7,&H2F0C,&H3F3C,&H0008,&H4E4E,&H297C,&H426D,&H0AFC
170 DATA &H008A,&H397C,&H4ED5,&H008E,&H4ED4
```




US GOLD GOODIES

U.S. Gold are giving away 'loadsaprizs' in this competition to promote Gauntlet II. The lucky winner will get an all-expenses-paid trip to the U.S. Gold headquarters in Birmingham and be shown around to see how a major software company functions. He, or she, will be treated to a U.S. Gold 'goodie-bag' full of T-shirts, posters, games and other valuable items. There will also be 15 runner-up prizes of a U.S. Gold game of their choice. All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning one of these wonderful prizes is answer the simple questions below and post your answer to us before 15 July 1988.

..... Questions

1) Spot the odd one out

- a) Gauntlet II b) Out Run
- c) Tiddlywinks d) Metro Cross



2) Match the game titles to the screen shots

- a) Out Run
- b) Gauntlet II
- c) Mickey Mouse

1 THE ODD ONE OUT IS:

2 OUT RUN IS PHOTO :

GAUNTLET II IS PHOTO:

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Thundercats is one of the latest in a line of cartoons which have become the most marketable concept in television - a precedent originally set by He-man and the Masters of the Universe, which was marketed by toy giants Mattel. Realizing the unlimited potential of this market, these cartoons are expensive and elaborate productions which introduce new features and characters in each episode as a showcase for their constantly increasing product range.

Hot on the heels of He-man, whose bulging biceps have recently been turned into pixels by U.S. Gold, Thundercats continues the theme of morality and the constant struggle and predictable victory over evil. Lead by that popular kitchen floor covering, Lion-o, the Thundercat ranks contain the obligatory stock characters, such as the beautiful Tigre and the comical coward who ends up in trouble. But you must lend a hand, (or should I say a paw), to Lion-o in his constant fight against Mumm-ra!

Mumm-ra is a moth-eaten mummified monster who comes to life at the beginning of the television programme

I can remember a time when Action-Men and Scalextric were the toys all young boys yearned for. But now, however, there seems to be a never ending supply of wierd and wonderful chracters coming into our homes via the humble home computer; Thundercats is just one of this new breed. Taking on the role of Lion-o I ventured into the territory of the evil Mumm-Ra in an effort to free my friends and regain the sacred Thundra jewel. Thundercats is neither a complete let-down nor a runaway success; its scrolling action together with the mini-mission contained within the game made me feel that it really lacked that special something. Sure enough I enjoyed playing the game, but I may have felt somewhat annoyed had I spent my hard-earned cash on it.

NC

pledging to destroy the Thundercats and invariably lurches off defeated at the end, vowing that he will succeed the next time.



A subsidiary of the evil one's hordes are the Molemen, who have entered the lands of Thundera, kidnapped three members of the Thundercats and stolen a magical jewel called the Eye of Thundera, which contains the power of the sword of omen. Your task is to direct Lion-o to the Castle Plun-dar, where he must rescue his comrades and retrieve the Eye. The game begins in the forest and Lion-o is waiting for your guidance by a statue which marks the start of the game. The joystick controls are moderately responsive and, as the game scrolls horizontally, manipulating the joystick to the left and right causes Lion-o to run in the corresponding direction.

Lion-o is immediately confronted by the first of Mumm-ra's misfits, which include full-size eaglemen and tiny shrew-like creatures. The slightest contact with either the eaglemen or the harmless-looking shrews results in the loss of a life. Lion-o has only a sword for his protection and with only one fighting movement, this very quickly proves to be inadequate. Pressing the fire button activates this one action, an overhead chop, which is ideal for slaughtering the eaglemen, but the little shrews escape untouched by this somewhat cumbersome movement. However, these seemingly insignificant but destructive little characters can be hacked by pulling back on the joystick, which causes Lion-o to crouch down, or leapt over by pushing it forward. In addition to warding

off the attack from Mumm-ra's hordes, Lion-o must collect goblets from trees by jumping up and hacking them down. The majority of these goblets increase your score, but some endow Lion-o with an extra life. The first section of the game must be completed within sixty seconds and if you are still battling when the time runs out, the evil Mumm-ra appears at the top of the screen and releases his entire team of eaglemen and shrews into the

STA
Rating

77%

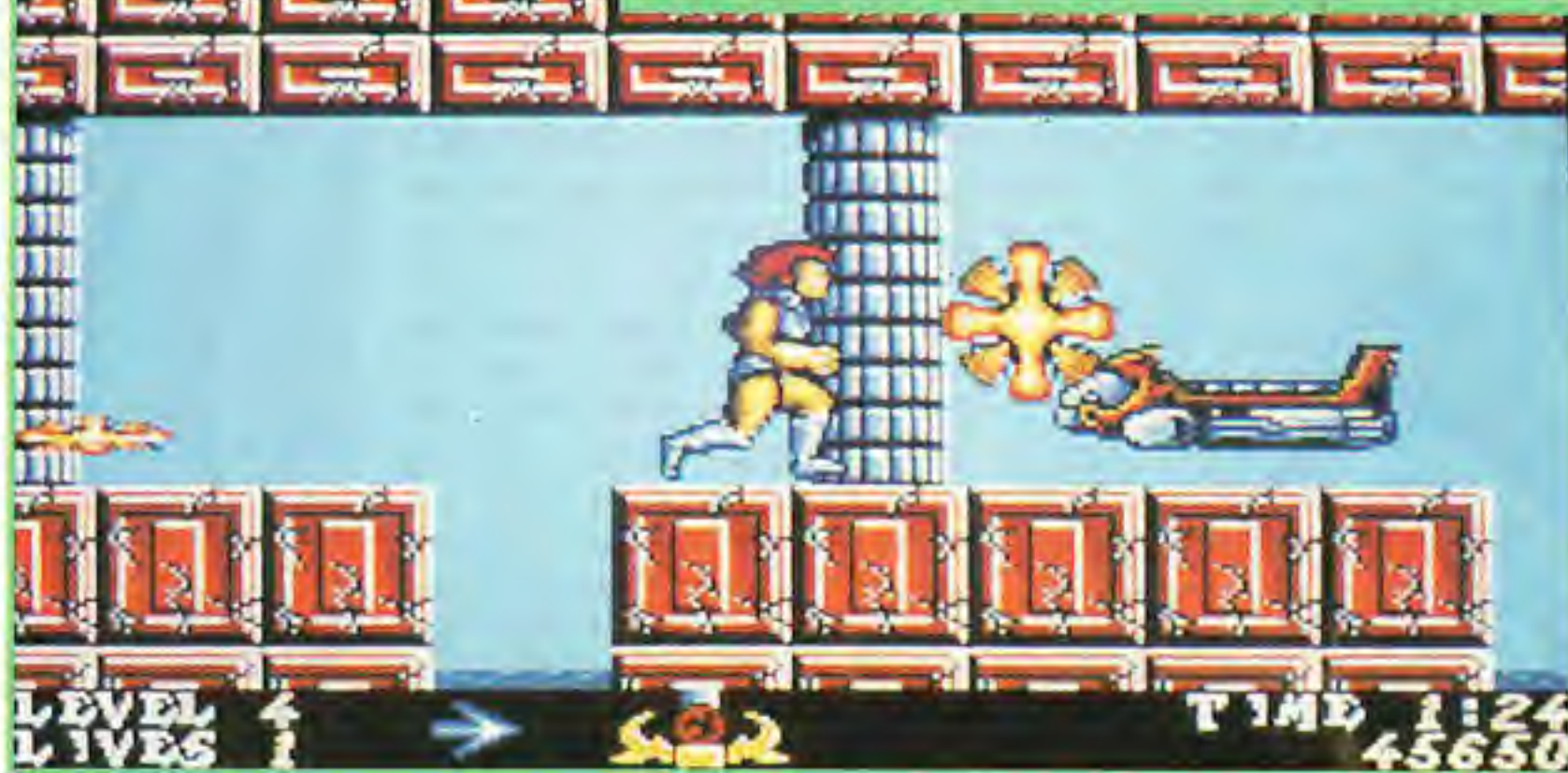
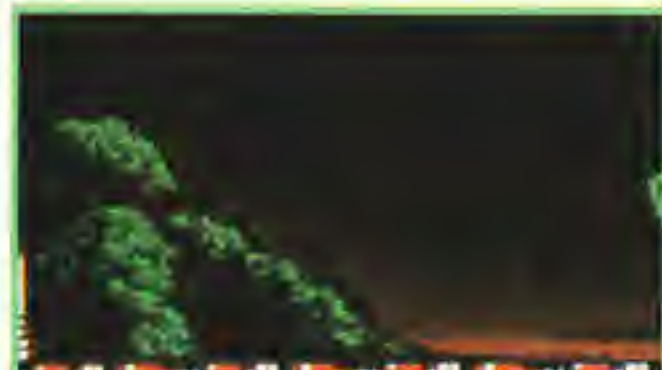
GRAPHICS: 82%
SOUND: 69%

ORIGINALITY: 75%
ADDICTIVENESS: 78%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 40000

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JOYSTICK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now, this little hover buggy will come in handy. Just climb in and away you go. Not only is it quicker but it saves all that jumping over obstacles. However, don't be too over confident, as even in the buggy you are still every bit as vulnerable to collision with those nasty fire balls.



game at once.

The journey continues in the second level on an unsafe bridge which stretches across a river and Mumm-ra employs an even stranger bunch of characters to lurch in Lion-o's path and impede your progress. Fat vultures fly in at different heights and speeds, while man-size wolfmen wait on the bridge to block your path and if Lion-o waits for too long on one section of the bridge, it collapses under his weight. You begin the game with only five lives and with only the rare chance of increasing this quota, and so preserving Lion-o's lives is crucial.

Special missions take place in the so-called Gardens of Elementals, where you have the choice of four different routes which are signposted: Water, Earth, Air and Fire. Each harrowing route contains individual hazards and unpleasant surprises and no one route could be described as an easy option. Water is similar to the second level in the game, but with the enemy in greater numbers: Air takes place on precarious platforms: Earth is fought in the forests and Mumm-ra makes three appearances and he must be hacked down on each occasion. But Fire is the most explosive route, where Lion-o must board his flying buggy and avoid balls of fire.

There are three rescue missions to complete and Lion-o has got his priorities right by first concentrating on the release

of the attractive female feline called Tigre. The other rescue missions are to release the other cats, Panthro and Wiley. Lion-o must then battle through a number of tedious forest levels in order to reach the final conflict. The last level takes place in a fiery hell, similar to the Fire section in the Garden of Elementals, but three times longer. But if this fourteenth and final level contains the Eye of Thundera, I must

confess that I failed to find it!

STA

Is it coincidence that Thundercats and Vixen, from Martech, are to be released in the same month? The two games have many similarities! However, with its individual missions, hazards and adversaries, there is far more variety in Thundercats. This is an absorbing game, but I cannot help thinking that the sequence of levels could have been better thought out. A better balance would have been achieved by a proportion of the tedious forest levels being placed between the Missions in the Garden of Elementals and the rescue attempts. Nevertheless, Thundercats is an exceptionally taxing and difficult game and may not be suitable for those over the age of fourteen - check it out!

JS

I'm afraid I must confess to having watched Thundercats on many a Saturday morning and, being the kid I am, was quite looking forward to this.

Once again, Elite haven't let me down. The game plays at a furious pace and has loads of addictivity. My only quibble is that the controls are occasionally rather sluggish.

It doesn't matter whether you watch the cartoon or not - you will still like this, because if you were to take away the licence aspect you still would have an excellent hack'n'slay platform romp.

SM



They keep on coming and you keep clouting them over the head with your chopper!



From level 2 onwards you have at your disposal a more potent weapon - here Lion-o uses his newly acquired laser to zap a shielded meanie

SHACKLED

US GOLD (£19.99)

If I said that this game was a dungeon adventure game from U.S. Gold which was played from a bird's-eye view perspective, you would think that I was describing Gauntlet. But the similarities between that particular arcade giant and Shackled do not end there! The question is: Why have U.S. Gold chosen to release this game in the same month as the long-awaited Gauntlet II?

As described, the game-screen shows an overhead view of a labyrinthian dungeon complex. But unlike Gauntlet, which has a multi-character and player facilities, you have only one character in Shackled. This plump dungeon-dweller has the daunting task of releasing dozens of prisoners from the dungeons and leading them to freedom.

The game is divided into 112 stages and the game-screen shows our unlikely hero waiting for some guidance in the first section of the dungeon. With joystick commands, the corpulent one can be moved in any direction and the screen scrolls to reveal more of the dungeon as

he reaches the borders. This dungeon, like all dungeons, is invested with vile characters, the first of which is a group of knife throwers who chase you into the unwelcoming arms of a wandering band of staff-twirling orientals who throw their sticks with great accuracy. Initially, your freedom fighter can ward off the attack with his own knife-throwing act and more effective weaponry can be gained as a reward for releasing the prisoners.

Collecting golden amulets which are scattered on the dungeon floor endows your character with greater speed, while keys are required to open the dungeon doors. With a key in your possession, you can enter a dungeon cell to see whether it contains any prisoners and although you cannot see inside the cell, reversing the joystick brings your character back out with any prisoners following behind. With these weakened souls in his charge, your character's progress is impeded considerably and more vulnerable to the many dangers.

Like Gauntlet, your character has an energy-status



gauge introduces new adversaries, such as hideous green blobs that attack your character if he stands around for too long and ogres who drain his energy dry in seconds.

Shackled is, of course, inferior to Gauntlet II in every aspect and I still cannot think why U.S. Gold decided to release them at the same time. Shackled would have received much more favourable reviews had it been judged on its own, but the many similarities between the two games makes it impossible not to draw parallels, and this inevitably highlights the game's deficiencies.

STA
Rating
50%

GRAPHICS: 50%
SOUND: 50%

ORIGINALITY: 47%
ADDICTIVENESS: 49%

DIFFICULTY: AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: 30000

CALLING ALL BURNERS .

SUPRE

HAWNG

Is

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--- STA 50 STA ---

In my capacity as a software reviewer, I have played some unusual computer games, but teach-yourself bomb disposal has got to rank as the most bizarre and irresponsible!

The schematic bomb interiors, it is claimed, have been recreated from original documents, and with beads of sweat already forming on my forehead, I turned to page four of the accompanying guide to good bomb disposal. (Warning! Page four should be read by anyone who is about to defuse a bomb - it is entitled, 'What is a bomb?') Having absorbed this vital information, I proceeded to rummage around my tool-bag for the so-

BOMB DISPOSAL

■■■■ CLASSIC (£19.95) ■■■■

called specialist tools. These precision instruments include an electric drill, some pliers, a screwdriver and other items which you might find in your dad's shed. Remember, always ask a grown-up for help if you are using any sharp tools while defusing the bomb. To select a tool or function, you position a cursor over the tool with the mouse and click the left-hand button to confirm your choice. Bearing in mind that the selection of an incorrect tool for a specific job

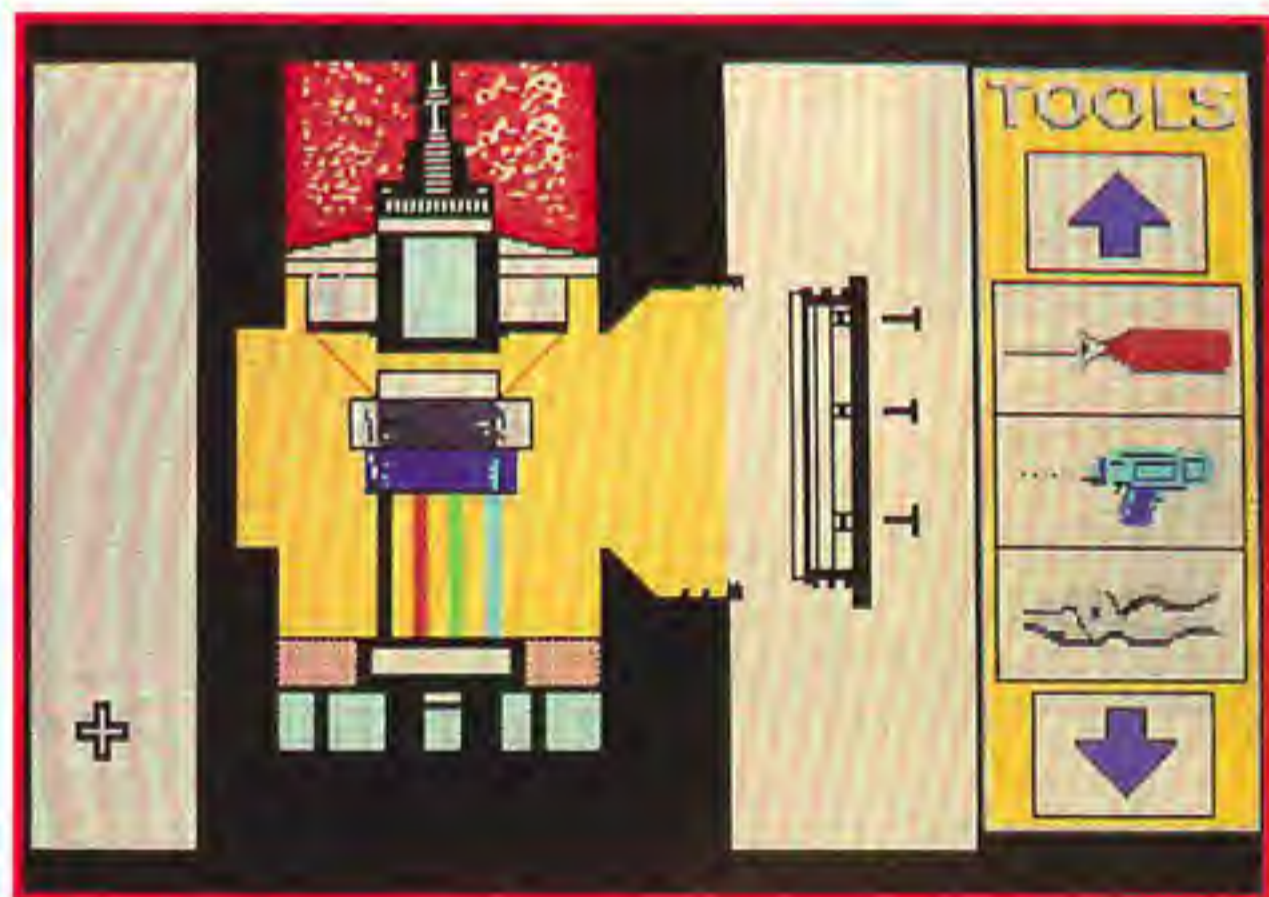
guarantees that you will have your head blown off, the invitation to 'rummage' around the tool-bag by clicking on Up and Down arrows, is like being asked to play Russian roulette!

The Schlottern Incendiary Bomb, it is claimed, is relatively simple to defuse and thus an excellent introduction to bomb disposal. Using Colonel Tom Tiddler's method, (don't laugh), you must select the most appropriate tool to remove the safety-pin and cut through the wires in standard sequence: red, blue and green - I think! However, Tiddler's suggested method neglects to disclose which tools to use, and so it really is a case of trial and error. With a possible change in the wiring sequence plus, a Trembler mechanism, the Sprengbrand H.E. bomb is an excellent challenge for the intermediate bomb disposer. All versions of the Schlottern bomb have built-in timers and so it is a race against the clock.

After this dangerously brief tuition section, you must proceed to defuse far more complex devices without any instruction. Guided missiles, a

V1 bomb and a torpedo, lead up to the ultimate challenges: a modern foreign missile and a device within the body of a dead terrorist. Failure to successfully defuse a bomb in this game results in a sickening animation sequence which shows the horror-stricken young soldier having the bomb blow up in his face.

This is certainly a novel game which appears to be a very hit or miss affair, until you extract clues from the accompanying manual. What is not certain, however, is whether or not Bomb Disposal should be treated as a form of entertainment, or a challenge which is of rather questionable taste.



**STA
Rating
50%**

**GRAPHICS: 44%
SOUND: 50%**

**ORIGINALITY: 65%
ADDICTIVENESS: 45%**

**DIFFICULTY: AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A**

on course for
the Atari ST



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BOLO

SIGNA PUBLISHING (£19.95)

"Love them or hate them, Breakout clones are released on the market with extraordinary regularity and just when you think the theme has been exploited to the limits, somebody releases the ultimate brick-buster!"

More than a decade ago, nobody could have envisaged that a simple bat-and-ball-against-brick game would be a major genre of arcade entertainment today.

The original game was introduced in the arcade as a variation on the 'Pong' theme and it is without doubt the most durable game in arcade history. There have been clones that have attempted to

justify themselves by the use of imaginative scenarios, whilst others were choked with special features. However, a software company called Application Systems of Heidelberg have done the seemingly impossible by taking brick-busting yet another step further. What next? A game in which you have to put all of the bricks back again?

Like the original, Bolo has black and white graphics, but the game can be played on either colour or mono monitor. The mouse has proved to be the more favourable form of control for this type of game, but plenty of smooth mouse-rolling room must be found for Bolo. Usually, the bat can only be moved in a straight line at the base of the screen, but in Bolo the bat has a very different function. The mouse can move the ball anywhere on screen, including above the wall of bricks. There are fifty separate levels beginning with a relatively simple introduction to brick-busting, Bolo-style. Clicking the left-hand mouse button brings the ball into play and as soon as you move the bat to intercept the ball, you notice the first difference. Traditionally, the ball hits and rebounds off the bat at a set pace, but in Bolo you are in control of the ball's speed. Once you have intercepted the ball you can nudge, support, transport and choose where you want to release it.

The playability of this game is out of this world, once you start playing it I can guarantee that you will be hooked!

Being able to move the bat all around the screen, has both advantages and disadvantages - on many occasions I accidentally hit the ball, which was on its way up, as my bat was going down!

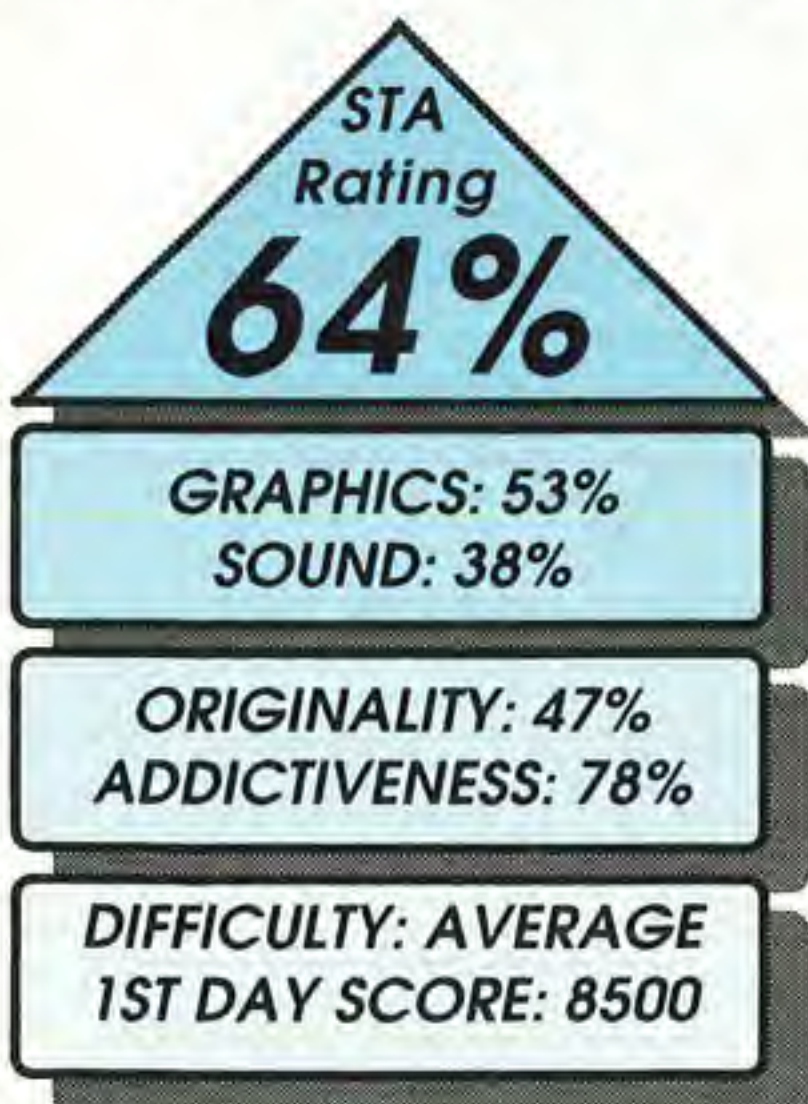
Although this is just another in the long line of 'Bat'n'Ball' games, it has enough differences to warrant its purchase. At present this is the best of its type on the ST. Buy it!

SM

The continual change in gameplay, combined with nonstop, no-fuss action makes Bolo a legitimate and justified addition to this prolific theme. The fact that the game is black and white is irrelevant, as the overall presentation is slick and stylish. Starbursts glint from bat and brick with every hit and there is no delay between levels. Bolo is simply a fine Breakout clone - look out for it!

JS

The first level has two simple and basic formations of bricks which do not affect the characteristics of the ball. However, ensuing levels change the gameplay considerably and the destruction of a brick may cause the ball to be more affected by gravity. This obviously increases the speed at which the ball falls down the screen and the ball itself loses its elasticity and bounce. The game becomes a tiring bout of keeping the ball from falling to the base of the screen. Impenetrable bricks defy you to break through to the wall and you are forced to transport the ball to the top of the screen in order to continue the demolition. Other bricks contain star-shaped projectiles which, when released, fall slowly to the base of the screen and in the heat of the action can even be mistaken for the ball itself. The ability to adapt to the unexpected is the key to success in this game, as there is no indication that you have hit a brick containing a special feature. Bolo is full of surprises!



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LORDS OF CONQUEST

ELECTRONIC ARTS (£19.95)

"This game of strategy is definitely one for the less zap-happy."

territorial struggle. Players take turns to attack each other and at the end of each year four or five phases occur. Firstly, the players may choose to develop their lands, investing in weapons, cities and the like. Land will yield produce - gold, crops and

Christmas time is undoubtedly a time for family get-togethers. After the obligatory turkey and pudding comes the Queen's speech and then out come the games - games that have patiently sat in the cupboard all year just waiting for their annual airing - classics, such as, Monopoly, Cluedo and Risk. Now, however, comes Lords of Conquest. Like the board game of Risk, Lords of Conquest is a war-game in which players vie for world supremacy. Programmed by Eon Software and distributed under the Electronic Arts banner, Lords of Conquest comes on a single disk. After booting the game, which incidentally creates its own ram disk on a 1040, I was presented with the game's main menu page. Glancing down its options I took off to the new game section where I entered all the relevant information regarding the game's components. Of course, I had to decide over which areas of the globe the battles would take place; options ranged from Europe to the Middle-East and from Britain to the entire world. There was also an option by which I could, if I so desired, create my own lands fit for ravaging.

Lords of Conquest is, as I have already pointed out, a strategy game of

horses - all of which are transferred to your stockpile. Trading only occurs in three or four-player games and during this time players may swap items which are stored in their stockpiles. Shipment becomes the penultimate phase. Players are individually invited to either re-locate their stockpiles to

Although I am not normally a great fan of war games, I must confess to actually enjoying this.

The game is very user-friendly, with lots of difficulty levels and other definable parameters. Just like the real thing, world domination is not something you acquire in an afternoon, and it will take you quite a few sittings before you crack it at expert level.

This is a perfect introduction to anyone who wants to give war-gaming a whirl. Yet due to its numerous difficulty levels, old hands will enjoy it too. Recommended.

SM

a safer area or to move their fighting forces to different areas. Finally, the conquest phase takes place in which players are given two chances to invade surrounding territories.

The final outcome of the game is decided by the number of cities held at the end of the years. If a player holds three cities then he is declared the winner. If, however, more than one player has three cities, then play continues until a sole winner is recognizable.

There are four levels of play available, which range from mere beginner to know-all experts. Easier levels have less resources available while the harder levels not only have more produce but also involve the introduction of boats. Play can be with up to four human players or, alternatively, a single-player game may be played against the computer. I tried my luck against the ST's war-gaming knowledge and found that I'll never be offered a place at the Ministry of Defence.

Lords of Conquest is a reasonable wargame which may not appeal to those of you who enjoy a more complex strategy game such as GMS, but I, a humble beginner, found it both fun and intriguing.

STA

As these wargames go, I'm afraid that I cannot profess to be one of the world's greatest enthusiasts. Lords of Conquest, however, managed to capture my attention and keep it for some time. At first the game did seem a little confusing, but after a quick scan through the manual, things soon began to click. Although sonically and graphically poor, Lords of Conquest does manage to maintain a high level of playability. While I'm still not convinced about the market the game is aimed at, I do feel that if you are looking for an introduction to war-gaming, then you could indeed do worse than invest in the Lords of Conquest.

NC



It's a sight that the war game strategy players amongst you will be familiar with - the battle map complete with regional boundaries and military unit icons.

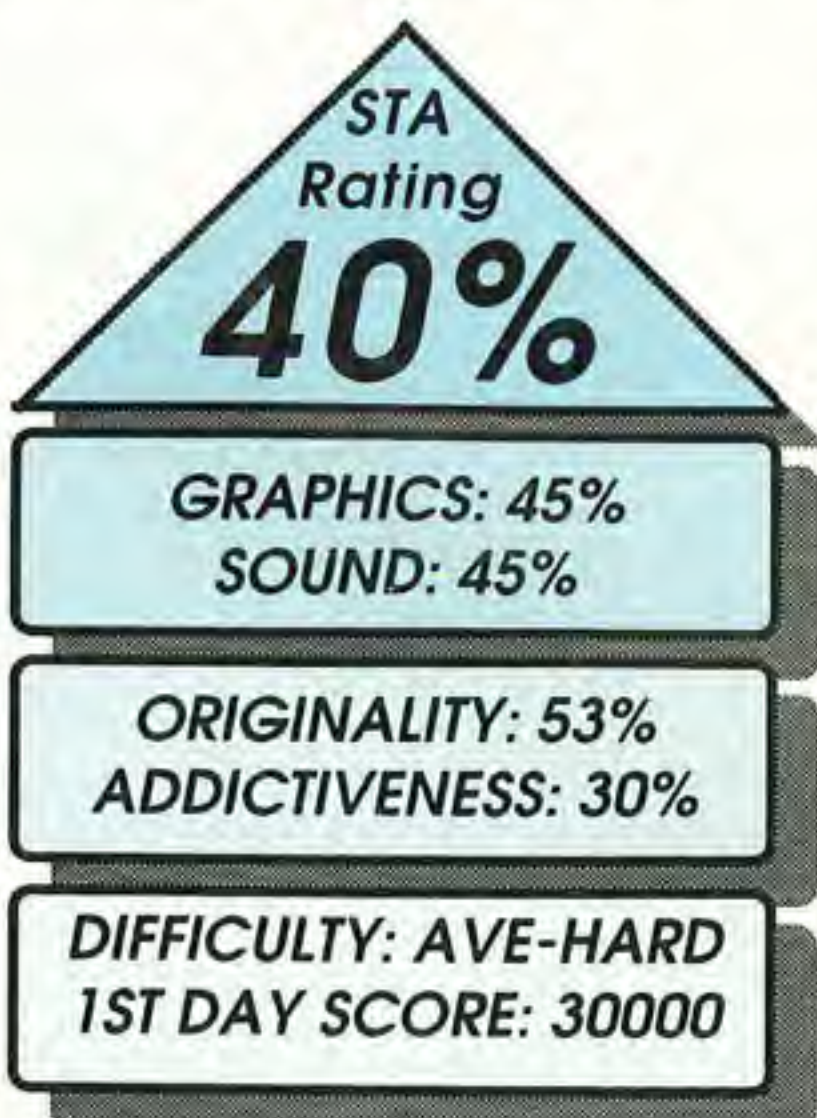
"Jeff Minter's 90ft high, laser-spitting camels are back! Only you can steer them to victory over the Zzyaxian Empire. Prepare yourself as you travel from the Dark Side of the Moon to the war zone."

The people of Earth were a peaceful, unified race, seeking only to roam the star system sharing their knowledge with any other beings they should meet. The Earthlings went about their business until, one day, they learned of the re-emergence of their ancient enemy, the evil empire of Zzyax. Not only was the Zzyaxian Empire re-kindling itself, but their plan was to strike at the Earth and destroy it and us, annihilating mankind once and forever!

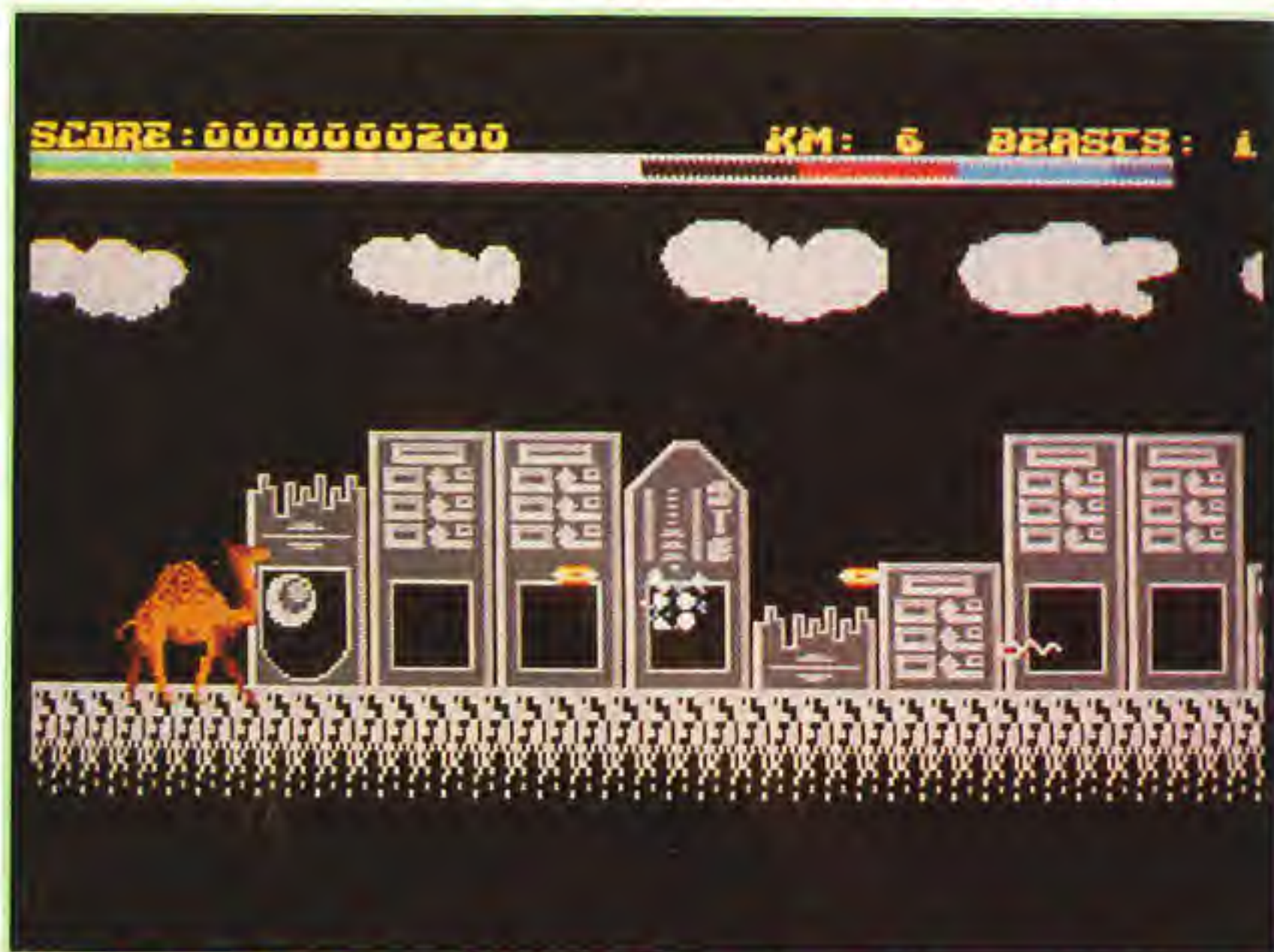
Over six thousand years ago, the ancestors of the Earth successfully managed to defeat the mighty Empire of Zzyax. Their victory became legendary and now mankind must look to the battle tactics used all those thousands of years ago in an attempt to save the world from imminent destruction.

It is known that in the years before man managed to create a stellar-drive which would take him through the galaxy, he was an expert in the field of genetic engineering. Man would utilize mutated forms of beasts for weapons of warfare. However, a number of these beasts were abducted from the humans by their alien adversaries.

Having been relocated and re-captured, the beasts were tempted back to the Earth by a number of cerebrally-enhanced goats (who are now, unfortunately, extinct.) The legendary tales of these beasts' conflict with their captors, known as "The Revenge of the Mutant Camels", had spread worldwide. Now we have no option but to use the beasts against the Zzyaxians. A coded RF signal has been sent to the ancient defence system on The Dark Side Of The Moon. Mankind is ready for the onslaught.



No, Mastertronic haven't invented a C64 emulator - but you wouldn't know it looking at those graphics!



REVENGE II

MASTERTRONIC (£9.95)

This is instantly playable but progress is far from easy. The firing system is tricky to use, but with perseverance it can work extremely well. Minteresque humour is evident throughout, yet the game somehow lacks his magic.

A brave attempt by Icon Design but a style like Minter's cannot be emulated; a certain something has been lost in the transition from 8 to 16-bit. Not bad for a tenner but devout Minter fans should hold their breath until Trip-a-tron arrives - it's not a game, but it has all of that Minter magic.

SM

After their long slumber the 600, 90-foot high, neutronium-shielded, laser-spitting death camels have been awakened. After being refreshed and revived by listening to the last surviving Pink Floyd CD, the camels had been ferried across the galaxy to the planet Zzyax Prime, there to attempt the ultimate battle in the defence of the Earth ... The Revenge of the Mutant Camels.

Although the game's packaging suggests that "Revenge II" is one of Jeff Minter's creations I'm afraid that this particular example belongs to him only in it's concept. Mr Minter's programs held cult status on the popular Commodore 64 computer, with titles like Laserzone, Hoverbover and Sheep in Space. His games were always instantly recognizable, not only because of the wacky graphics, but also for the weird and wonderful effects that our Jeff managed to make. Graphically, "Revenge II" is very similar to the C64 original, with the exception of the obvious improvements that the ST can offer. The sound, too, is reminiscent of the original, with a bouncy little number playing casually in the background behind all the obligatory zaps and kabooms. But, as I mentioned, "Revenge II" was not programmed by Jeff Minter and therefore seems to lack all those highly polished edges that I expect he would have included within the game.

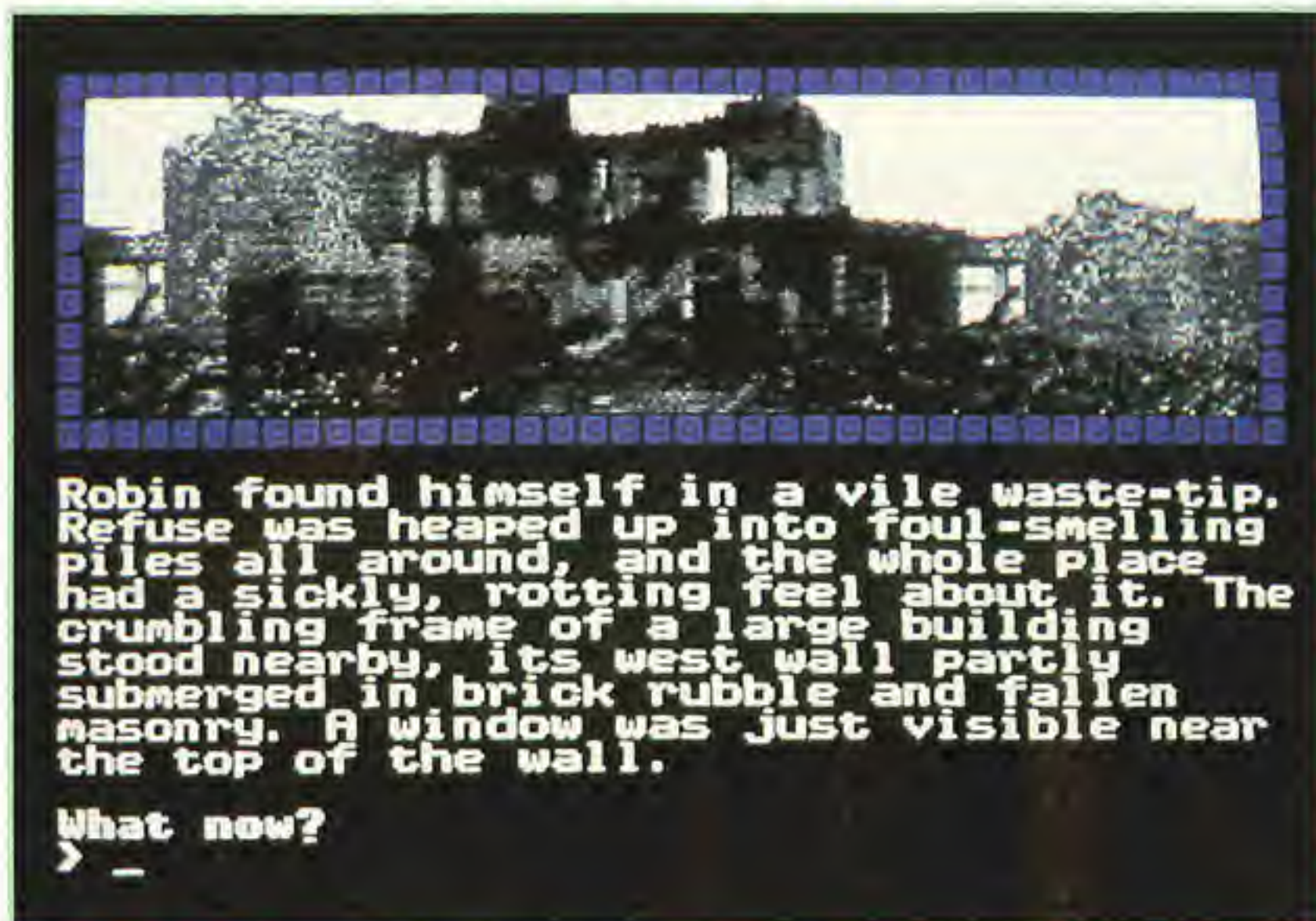
Needless to say, "Revenge II" is an interesting piece of software. Both fun and

frustrating to play, captivating and yet tiresome, bright and yet dull. Personally, I was not overjoyed by this piece of software; fans of the original game will no doubt point out that the antics of 90ft. high, laser-spitting camels are an acquired taste. I can only suggest that you decide for yourself.

With the creation of the popular C64, Mr Minter's titles became almost legendary. Jeff's hallmarks became the diverse game ideas and characters within his programs. Sheep in Space, Megagalatic Llamas battle at the edge of time and The attack of the Mutant Camels all became top titles. So far, with his Atari ST, Mr Minter has produced the wonderful Colourspace and the magnificent Trip-A-Tron (See issue 1.) Although being his game, Revenge II has not been programmed by Jeff. Unfortunately, this factor is instantly recognizable and the game becomes nothing more than a flattering piece of plagiarism. Still, if you were an original Yak fan, then it may well be worth the budget price Mastertronic are asking.

NC

The presentation of Mindfighter is quite different to other graphic adventures. The graphic area is small and the graphics are high-quality black and white digitised pictures.



From the information I received before getting this game, I was quite looking forward to it. Even when it arrived it looked good, you even get the book on which the game is based. The graphics are drab and washed out, in keeping with the story.

Snag one, it would seem that in order to progress you'll do so quicker if you've read the book.

Snag two, and the more important one, is that the command parser is very limited. I mean if you have a knife and you want to throw it, or any object you have, why shouldn't you? Also, and this is a sort of hint, if you've got a blanket and you find an electrified fence, wouldn't you put the blanket on the fence and climb over? I would, I tried, I died.

SK

MINDFIGHTER

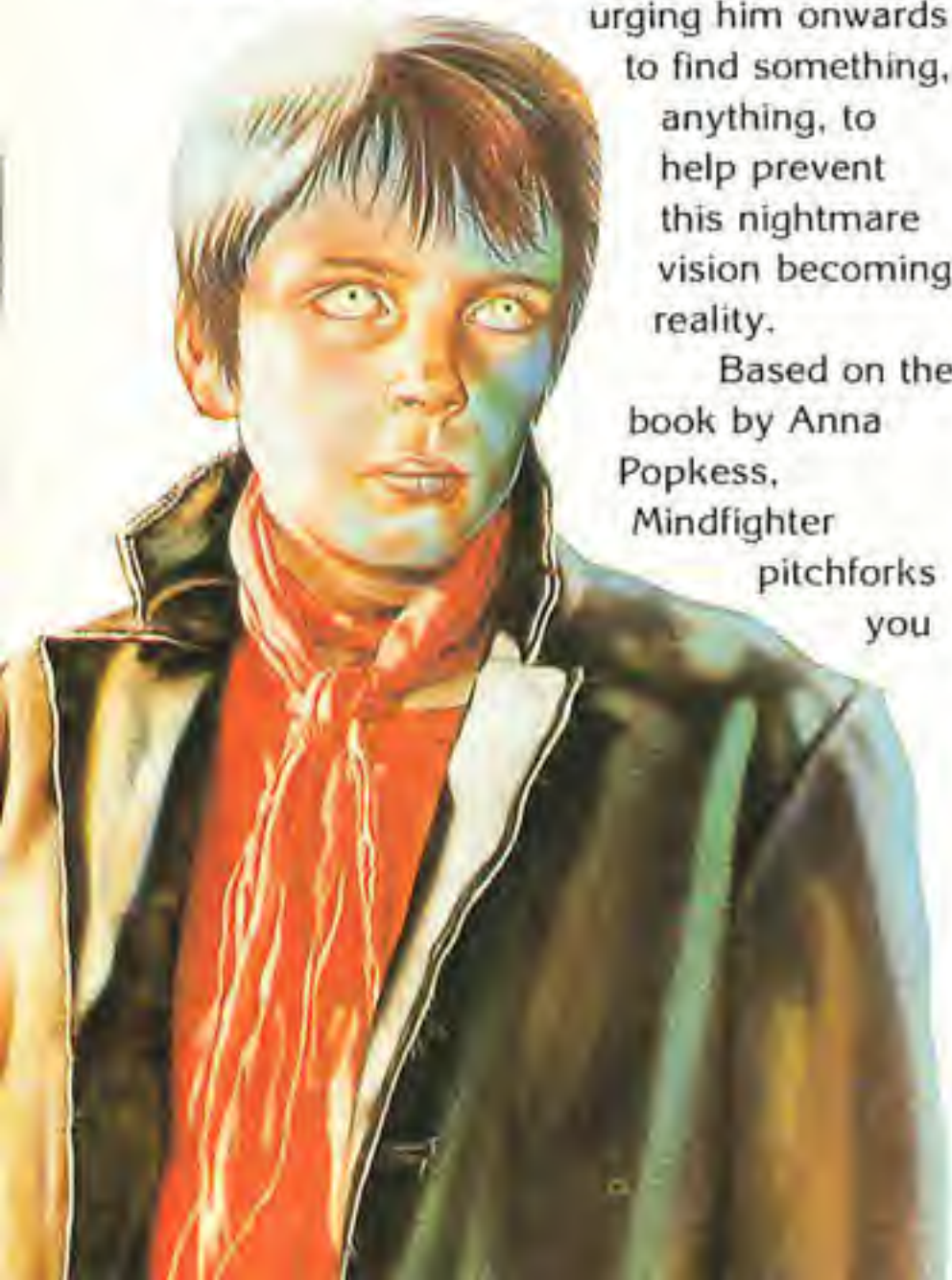
ACTIVISION (£19.95)

"A cold wind drifted across the harbour mouth banking the swirling yellow fog into the ruins of the old wharf. The boy turned, looked away from the cold oily waters, and gazed landwards towards the grey, crumbling blocks of the smouldering city which lay stark and shattered under the wintry pall of the nuclear winter sky. His strange luminance-green eyes stared unblinking at the once familiar city, but his mind refused to accept the horror of what he saw."

Somewhere out there was a clue, a solution to the nightmare. The impulse to force himself awake and return to the world that existed in the time before the holocaust must be resisted. Time was running out, and in that twilight side of his mind he could dimly hear the Professor's voice

urging him onwards to find something, anything, to help prevent this nightmare vision becoming reality.

Based on the book by Anna Popkess, Mindfighter pitchforks you



forward into the nightmare of the post-holo-caust world which is wracked with death and brutality. Robin is an eleven-year-old boy who possesses remarkable paranormal powers which enables him to move forward in time and send back visions of the future in the eerie green pools of his eyes to a team of parapsychologists.

It is in the ruined shell of Southampton that we find the boy, tired and starving, struggling to survive the twin killers of disease and starvation. With the old order of society destroyed, the new rulers enforce their will upon the survivors by terror tactics. Brutal guards roam the streets attacking men, women and children. The workers are forced to watch the public amputations and executions which take place in the streets. Hopefully, Robin will penetrate the Headquarters of the new order and send back data which the team can use to avert the final conflict.

People fighting over dead dogs, rabid foxes lying in wait for the sick and injured, and mass burial graves swirling with disease. This is a far cry from the previous games which have been the hall-mark of Fergus McNeill. Fergus has

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COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

previously brought us spoof fantasy games, such as, 'Bored of the Rings' which was packed with Pythonesque humour. The text found within this little package could easily qualify for some kind of 'X' Certificate.

The game features half-screen graphics which shows either simple, stark city backdrops or the face of Robin with those glowing optics. The choice of the simple graphics is quite fitting and nicely complements the storyline. The graphic screens were created by the authoress on the Atari ST using the Advanced Art Studio from Rainbird. The book of the game was

...yeah as I said...the presentation of Mindfighter is quite different to other graphic adventures. The graphic area is small and the graphics are high-quality black and white digitised pictures...

STA
Rating
58%

GRAPHICS / TEXT: 60%
GAMEPLAY: 50%

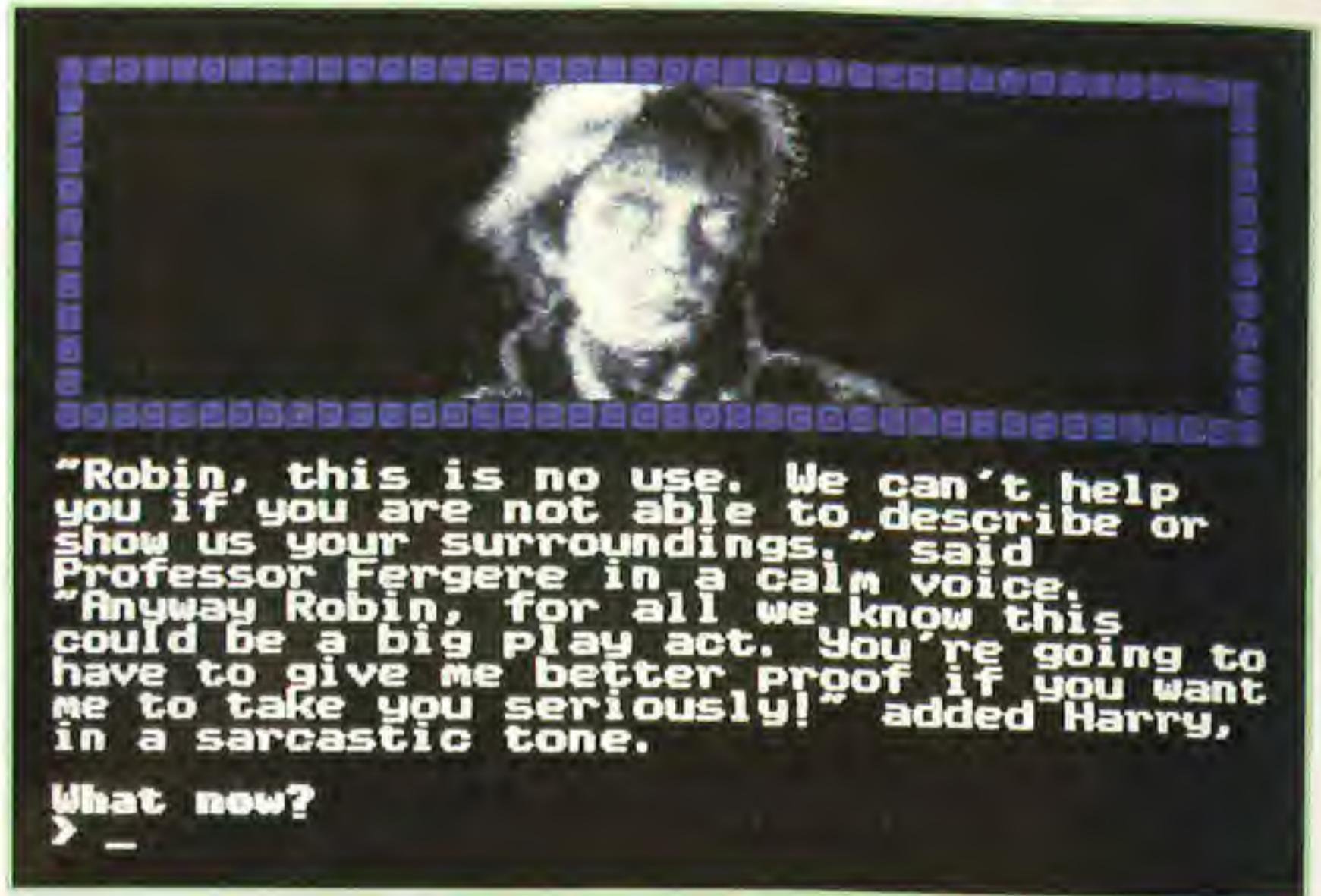
ORIGINALITY: 65%
ADDICTIVENESS: 55%

originally written on the Amstrad PCW and it was from this that Fergus McNeill created the adventure.

There is an additional menu which may be displayed and from this you may use the mouse cursor to set up various options. Although the Sound on/off option is displayed, there is, in fact, no sound in the ST version. Ram-Save may be set as the default. Oops and Status may also be selected. Switching the graphics off is also an option and this speeds up the game play. The complete game is loaded at the beginning of play and no further disk access is required. This feat is no doubt achieved by the fact that the game is also available for the 48K Spectrum and Commodore 64.

The book, which is included in the package, is 150 pages long and, apart from the actual subject matter, is rather lightweight. From this we find that not only can Robin project his mind, he has the ability to change his form into that of any animal he chooses. In this way he need not find a way through a fence, he simply changes into an eagle and flies over it. Some trick eh? To achieve this remarkable option in the game, you need to read the book carefully. The game follows the book in many ways and is broken into four set parts. The Future, Inside the System, The Present and, finally, the problems of avoiding the final conflict.

The player's guide makes much of



I was bitterly disappointed by this game. Having been captivated by the humour I found in 'Bored of the Rings' I was eager and willing to like anything that Fergus served up next. However, as with the former game, we again have a storyline full of atmosphere and tight with tension, but with no gameplay in sight.

The game is obviously built to squeeze into the machines at the smaller end of the market and therefore has few of the refinements we would expect in a 512K machine. While surrounded by rabid foxes I typed, 'ATTACK FOX'. The game's reply was:

'Whoever Robin is thinking of is not here'.

'The fox leaped forward and buried his teeth into Robin's neck!' It has potential, but it's out of its league on an ST.

AM

the 'Swan' system used to program and control the game. Using this method we have available to us a real-time game in which other characters wander on and off centre stage and allow us to interact with them. Swan was written by the Gilsoft company which was also responsible for the Quill and the Paw adventure writing systems. As Fergus had used those systems to write his previous games, this is no doubt why he turned to Gilsoft to help create a system capable of giving him the new facilities he needed. This system may also account for the strange happenings which caused our hero to suddenly start moving to other locations under his own steam when I was busy re-reading the player's guide! The guide also explains that, using this system, the game will understand such commands as, 'Put the paperweight into the box and then put the box in the cupboard'. This claim may well be true, but unfortunately it is incapable of understanding such commands as, 'THROW KNIFE' or 'EMPTY CAN' or 'POUR PETROL'. In fact the parser is remarkably stupid, which comes as a bit of a surprise after its much trumpeted claims.

STA



SUPER SKI

MICROIDS (£19.99)



"Strap a couple of planks to your feet, grab a pair of broom handles and head with me to the nursery slopes in Microid's latest release, Super Ski."

I have never been a real winter sports enthusiast and categorize skiing as a most dangerous sport, comparable with parachuting, cliff-diving, and the like.

The first screen that appears is the options page. This takes the form of a well-presented information hut situated on a lonely mountain top. From here a player may choose to practise an event, compete, view the top scores, join the scoreboard or leave the program. Not wishing to leave

Having been a long-time fan of Ski Sunday I really enjoy watching those loonies race down steep mountains. Until recently, however, I have noticed a sizeable gap in winter sports simulations of a good skiing game. Now, thanks to Microids, we have Super Ski. The behind-the-skier view, together with the way in which the courses twist and turn, help to add to the game's realism. I thoroughly enjoyed this game and recommend it to everyone. It's definitely not easy, but it's certainly great fun.

NC

the slopes for an apres-ski just yet, I opted to sign up on the scoreboard. Up to six players can compete in Super Ski, and names are easily input using self-explanatory on-screen directions.

Four events are to be found within Super Ski: Slalom, Downhill, Giant Slalom and Ski Jumping! Being somewhat of a novice to this sport, I chose to test out the



game's practice option. I was soon presented with a screen containing five icons, one for each event and the last which could take me back to the options menu. After glancing at the available options I decided to try my hand at the Giant Slalom event. The screen changed to depict the three different routes down the mountain: red, blue and black. Being a mere beginner, I headed for the easy red route and soon found myself in the starting hut at the top of the mountain. Unlike other skiing games, Super Ski takes an "out-of-

I liked this game. It is difficult, yet is one of those games that is like the carrot on the end of the stick. You can see what you're after, but just can't quite get there. The graphical representation is one of the best I have seen in dealing with a difficult subject such as snow. The controls are well implemented and the scrolling is smooth and precise. The one main gripe with the game is the very faint marking of the edge of the course with, would you believe it, little piles of snow. I'm convinced they're a major contribution to eyestrain. It's the only game I know that can make you snowblind. That said, however, the four events combine to make up one of the best ski games on the market.

MM

the-cockpit" view with the player controlling his character from behind as he hurtles down the icy slopes.

Controls to the game are very easy to master, although actually stopping became an art-form in itself. Either a mouse or a joystick can be used. I found the latter option to be easier to control and soon found myself flying towards the base camp at a tremendous speed. The skier can be made to crouch, stand, turn and with a bit of practice, jump. The first three events all require the player to reach the finish gate in the shortest possible time with the least amount of penalties. Extra seconds are added to your final time for missing the obligatory gates.

The final event, ski jumping, is graphically similar to the first three but, of course, involves you throwing yourself off a tall slope. Obtaining an optimum pitch will allow your skier to gain those precious extra metres. Again, control of the character is well implemented.

Graphically, Super Ski is a very well presented piece of software. The way in which the courses seem to pitch and roll make the feeling of "being there" even more convincing. The route is often lined with spectators, although no cow bells are noticeable. The game includes some "nice" graphical features, such as, the wavering of the slalom poles as a player brushes past them. I particularly liked the graphical representation of the crashes: the skier would tumble down and roll up into a giant snowball. Sonically, too, the game is well presented with all the obligatory wooshes.



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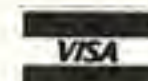
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A screen bursting with meanies of every description - the barrage is continuous!



The onus was on U.S. Gold to make this the most accurate arcade conversion ever, and from the exact scaled-down graphics and remarkable speech synthesis to the four-player participation, they have certainly produced a game that lives up to my high expectations. A hundred dungeons wait to be explored by you and three intrepid chums and each room contains the most repulsive and determined adversaries in arcade game history. What better recommendation can I give than to say that U.S. Gold's conversion loses nothing in the translation from the highly successful and popular arcade game!

JS

GAUNTLET II

STAI

US Gold (£19.99)

"Remember the days when arcade conversions were invariably long-awaited anticlimaxes? Now, thanks to advancing techniques and the standards set by U.S. Gold, this disappointment could be a thing of the past for ST users!"

Gauntlet II is reputed to be the most authentic and faithful arcade conversion to date and so, as an ardent enthusiast of the arcade game, I was eager to take this opportunity to recoup some of the money I had pumped into the machine. During the development of Gauntlet II, Kevin Bulmer from Gremlin demonstrated a loading-screen sequence that required a hard disk-drive to run. Incredibly, this same sequence, which begins with



a side view of the arcade machine in the distance and zooms in, elevates up to the control console and finally into the screen, has been crammed onto one disk. A packed option and information screen describes the powers and strengths of the various adversar-

ies and you can select which character you wish to portray. It has been widely reported that up to four people can simultaneously participate in Gauntlet II, but you will have noticed that only two joysticks can be plugged into your ST. But for a modest sum, a four-player interface is available from U.S. Gold.

Your choice of character can affect your performance in the game, as they have varying strengths and weaknesses. Naturally, armed with massive battle axes, Thor the warrior is the strongest character in battle, but what he gains with physical strength he lacks completely in magical power. Thyra the Valkyrie is a comely wench with great strength in close combat, but she has limited shot power and, again, magical ability is not her forte. However, as an ageing wizard, Merlin must avoid combat at all costs, although his infamous magical powers are unbeatable. Finally, lacking in shot-strength and close combat skills, the spritely Questor the Elf makes up for this with speed and accomplished

magic abilities. Manipulating the joystick makes your character selection and pressing the firebutton 'conjures up the character' and the excellent sampled speech which is taken from the arcade version, welcomes the characters to the dungeon.

The game-screen shows the overhead view of the dungeon and, to the right of the screen, a status display accumulates each score and monitors



The dark blue shrouded meanies around the centre of the screen are 'death' - they will sap your energy at a horrendous rate. However, if like the wizzard in shot 2, you collect a potion they'll all get zapped leaving you to collect any goodies that may be lying around!



icipating, a strange relationship prevails which falls somewhere between alliance and rivalry:

which give you the choice of moving to the next level or skipping five and going straight to the sixth.

Gauntlet II is billed as, "The most authentic simulation yet from an arcade machine", and I fully agree with that statement; Gauntlet II is simply brilliant! A four-player option is available if a separate interface is purchased, but not having this item I played a two player game with SM. Together we managed to conquer many of the deeper dungeons, having to stop only because time governed. I wholly recommend the two-player option to you; not only can more territory be covered, but the expressions and noises your playing-partner makes can be hilarious. Gauntlet II is undoubtedly the best arcade-conversion ever, get it!

NC

the character's ever decreasing health quota. Each character begins the quest with 1500 health points, which under normal circumstances decrease one at a time. But the constant harassment from the many adversaries within the dungeon has a rapid and adverse effect on the character's health. The labyrinthian dungeon is made up of rooms of varying size which are linked together by a plethora of corridors. Each of the rooms contains a constant enemy presence which regenerate as quickly as you can destroy them, and in the first levels, shrouded ghosts swarm around the character, while thugs called Grunts take turns to club the heroes senseless.

fight against the common enemy and rivalry in the fight for treasure and riches. Treasure chests can contain bonus-points, food for nourishment, money, potions or death! Golden keys which are scattered around the dungeons can be collected and used to release locked casks or to break the walls between the dungeons. Often, there is only one key or to make an access between the dungeon rooms and so preservation of the key-holder is of paramount importance. Moving into the adjacent dungeon, demons spit fireballs or bite the characters when they come into close proximity, while Lobbers lob rocks over the walls. There are two exits in the first dungeon

Level six contains a wealth of treasure and objects, but the laby-

If a number of players are par-

STA Rating **88%**

GRAPHICS: 90%
SOUND: 81%

ORIGINALITY: 78%
ADDICTIVENESS: 91%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 26250



"There was a time when vertically-scrolling shoot'em-ups were released with annoying regularity. But thankfully, new additions to this prolific theme are being regulated at a more sensible rate."

SIDEWINDER

MASTERTRONIC (£9.99)

With Mastertonic's promise : 'an orgy of destruction' culminating in: 'a final apocalyptic climax', and so I grasped the joystick with some trepidation and modestly selected the Novice level of difficulty out of a list of five, ranging from Beginner to Master. As the craft emerges from the channel, the first section of terrain scrolls into view and the joystick can move the craft anywhere on screen.

Even a 'Novice' can see that this planet is hostile and keyed up to military aggression, as each building seems to be linked to an intelligent military network.

The layout of the terrain is similar to Hades Nebula with swivelling gun turrets and circular rocket launchers which are set on the back of a massive space station.

At first, your craft is equipped with a single-shot weapon which is activated by repeatedly pressing the firebutton and a constant barrage of fire is required to destroy any section of the terrain. Therefore, after a concentrated attack on one section, you can focus your attention on another area. Each ground-based weapon emits heat-seeking fireballs which drift into your path and pursue the craft. The fireballs are at their most dangerous during the heat of the action when they become concealed by the explosions.

The assault on this colossal ship begins over the Hydroponic or artificial vegetation area and as you progress towards the nerve centre of the vessel, the enemy increase the fortification of their ground defences and introduce attack from the air. You are confronted by eleven different forms of interceptor craft throughout the game, which arrive in a variety of numbers and formations. Nothing is achieved by trying to avoid these alien craft as they tenaciously remain on screen,

follow your craft and emit their deadly cargo of fireballs. A concentrated effort must therefore be made to eliminate every craft as it enters your air space.

While the aliens are slumbering, the attack moves to the so-called Residential level and the pace quickens. The realization of this infiltration induces the host aliens to introduce Ground military vehicles in the game and so-called Crawlers and Walkers strengthen the defence forces. Even in the early stages of the game, the odds are stacked against you and so craft modifications can be collected to

strengthen your resolve. These 'power packs' are indicated by square tiles with different letters depicting the specific feature each one contains. Collecting a tile with the letter 'P' on it enables you to destroy any craft or building with one shot, regardless of its armoured protection, while an 'R' endows you with rapid and continuous firepower. Additionally, 'G' indicates that tile contains Ghost

properties, which render your craft momentarily invisible to the alien forces, while a handy Hover facility enables you to halt the craft in mid-air and concentrate an attack on a particularly armoured and point-worthy section of the ship.

As you progress across the flight deck and the command level, you are met by an even more enthusiastic and concentrated reception, determined to protect the very orb of the vessel, the Control level. Destruction of this vulnerable area results in the eradication of the entire space station and a resounding victory for you - something which eluded me, even after a lengthy and concentrated effort!

Well, well, well. What a surprise, a shoot'em-up! I haven't seen one of these for at least a week!!

After having played the game continuously for about three hours now, I can safely say that this is even better than Xenon. The colourful graphics are brilliant, with some of the best explosions ever to have emerged from a computer! In fact, my only gripe is that the horizontal scrolling is a little jerky.

This definately relieves Xenon of its crown as king of the shoot'em-ups, and for a tenner you would be mad to let it pass you by! Enough said?

SM

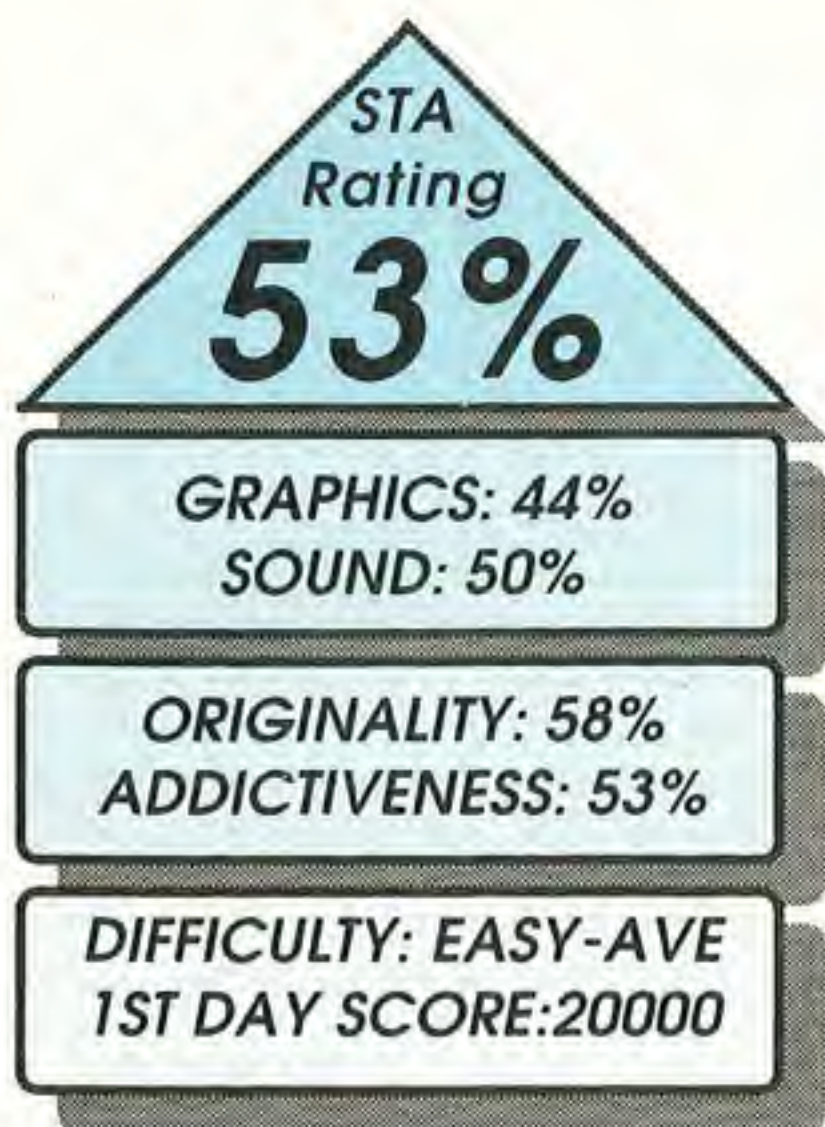
Reviewing aerial assault games used to be a bit of drudgery - a mundane task which could be likened to a general practitioner treating the common cold. But the drastic reduction of this once exploited genre actually makes it a pleasure to evaluate. Sidewinder contains all the addictive properties and frantic action that makes this such a popular type of game, and although Mastertonic are certainly not stretching the boundaries of innovation here, they have utilized the positive properties of the theme to great effect - check it out!

JS



Explosive action! Sidewinder features some of the best destruction graphics yet seen on the ST. And as for the sampled sound effects...

The sideways-scrolling (played) level and gameplay are very reminiscent of *Quarterback* (and is viewed in this issue) but it's worth being replaced with *Vixen* (this issue)



"Corrine Russell, or 'Vixen' as she has recently become known in the software industry, is certainly a 'foxy lady' and a very appealing advertisement for a young, male-dominated market. But 'curvy Corrine' and months of hype have made the game itself seem of secondary importance. Surely it is the quality of the game-play that is most important, isn't it?"

Can't really say much about this one, except, 'nice publicity, shame about the game'. Vixen is a good game but there is something lacking... The graphics are quite good, the animation could be a lot smoother and there could be more variation in the game. Apart from that, ... One redeeming feature is the music - very catchy and easy to listen to. However, after all is said and done, this game does not inspire me to play it more than I have to, which is really what a good game should encourage you to do.

MM



VIXEN

MARTECH (£19.99)

Even with Martech's promise of 'Screen after screen of whip-cracking action', the game disk and instruction booklet are of little concern, as the free poster of Vixen beckons to be unfolded. Testing the breaking strain of a rather scanty leopard-skin bikini, the Vixen stands pouting provocatively with bullwhip in hand - you begin to wonder whether this is a computer game or a girly magazine!

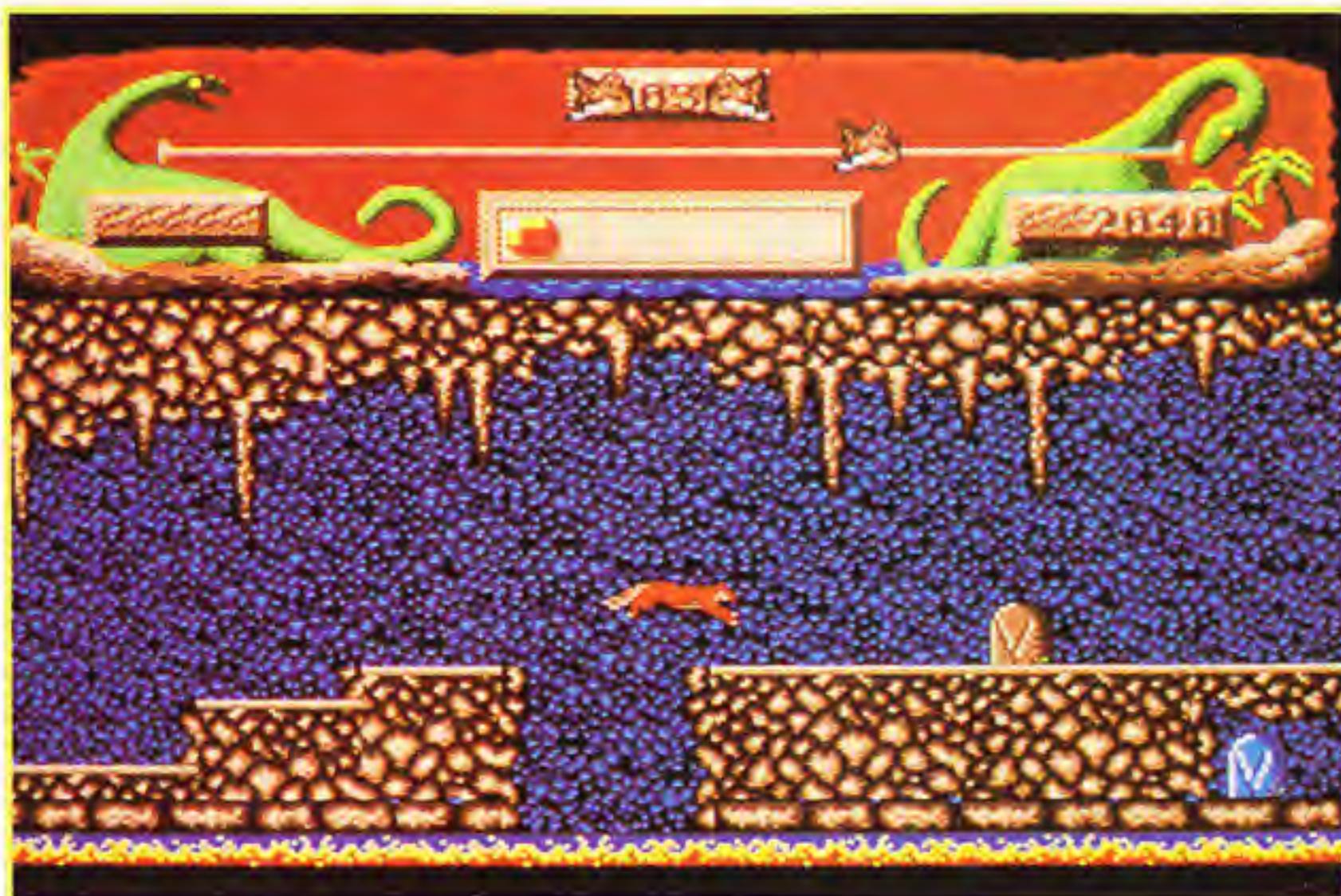
The planet Granath, we are told, is under siege from dinosaurs and prehistoric woman-eating mutants who have destroyed everyone on the planet except for Vixen.

Contrary to rumour that she was raised by a plumber and his wife in East Cheam, Vixen was in fact abandoned as a child and raised by foxes. Naturally, she has developed fox-like instincts and powers and can wield a bullwhip to great effect.

Miss Russell is certainly getting some exposure in this product and a digitized picture of the girl informs you that the game has loaded. Pressing the Return key reveals the game-screen, which shows a horizontally-scrolling jungle scene. In anticipation of the vigorous action, it appears that Vixen has discarded her scanty leopard skins



for a stylish blue bikini - presumably from the Bruce Oldfield collection! The game is divided into timed levels and a timer which is set in an elaborate status display above the game-screen indicates how much time you have to



complete each level. Joystick controls are certainly being used to the full in this game, with all eight directional points controlling Vixen's movements.

KEYBOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
JOYSTICK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pushing the joystick to the left or right makes her run in the corresponding direction and sets the screen scrolling.

The first obstacles soon present themselves to our heroine in the shape of so-called mutant dinosaurs, which constantly crawl and fly in the opposite direction. Contact with these strange beasts results in the loss of a life, which is indicated by a rather dramatic dying sequence. These marauders can be avoided by leaping and ducking, but the most effective protection is afforded with Vixen's trusty bullwhip, which is activated by positioning the joystick in the desired direction and pressing the firebutton to send the whip cracking. The recipient of the whiplash is eliminated from the game, but immediately replaced by another.

The jungle terrain is fraught with pits which can be leapt by forcing the joystick into the top left and right-hand

corners. But as Vixen flies through the air, you must be ready to intercept any mutants with the whip and control her landing. As usual, there are many objects to collect to help you and the land is prolific in gems which increase your score. But the main task is to collect as many fox-heads in order to gain so-called 'Fox Time'. These heads are suspended from trees and posts and a Fox's head indicator in the status display increases as you collect. If the indicator is at its maximum setting at the end of the level, Vixen metamorphosizes into a fox and enters a subterranean level. This bonus game allows you to collect so-called mega gems which increase your score considerably and there is no fear of intervention from the reptiles and mutants underground. At the end of the subterranean sections, Vixen emerges in her original form and you continue with the game above ground. Negotiating a safe path through the jungle becomes

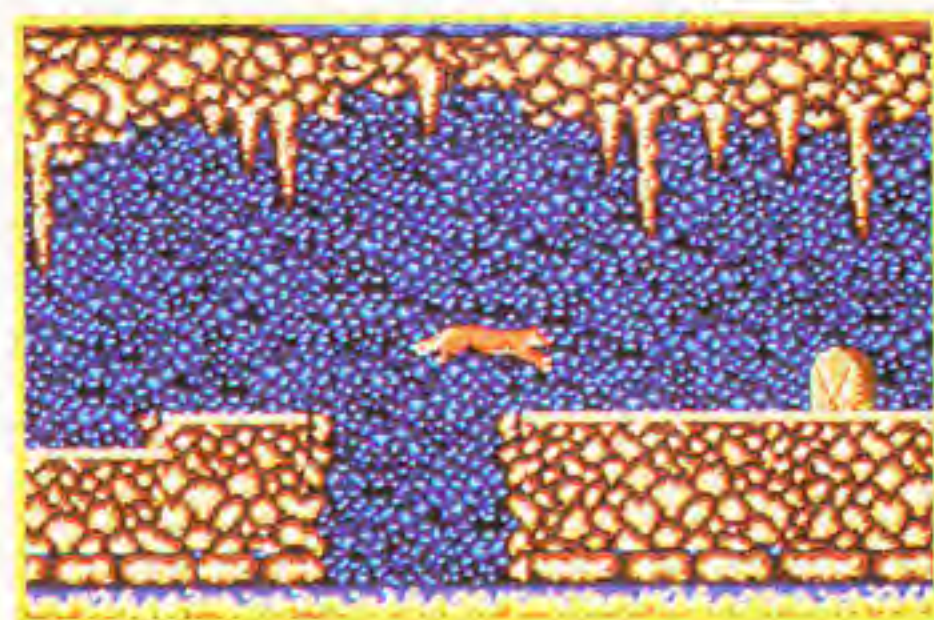


Once you have played the game, the reason why Vixen was treated to so much hype and publicity is immediately apparent. In fact, it is because the game is very similar to so many jungle jaunts already on the market - there is certainly nothing new or innovative about pits and mutants, and the unchanging sequence of above-ground and subterranean worlds makes the game somewhat predictable. But surprisingly, the game is not at all inferior, having more than adequate graphics and controls and the game-play is absorbing and often 'foxing'. By the way, if you phone 0323 766616 by mistake and hear a distressed woman panting on the other end of the line, don't panic! It is simply Miss Russell keeping us up to date with events on Granath - what fun!

JS

increasingly difficult as more mutants and reptilians lurch on screen and the terrain becomes increasingly pitted until it is practically impassable.

STA



The battle for 'most gruesome adventure of the year' continues. This offering comes with the message: 'Don't let this happen to you' - very sensible advice if you ask me!



UNINVITED

■■■■ MIRRORSOFT (£24.95) ■■■■

"Hush! Don't scream, it's your own fault after all. You were not invited into our sanctuary. What we do here in the dark corners of this house away from the prying eyes of the world is of no concern to the living."

You do not belong here, you should have stayed out there in the sunlight where it is safe. Here, horror lurks behind every door and madness and fear gnaw at the mind. Hush, hush, you are screaming again. Be calm and draw near my friend, for soon it will be over for you and you will be as we are. I promise you, soon the terror will stop and your beating heart will cease its pounding - FOR EVER!

You might expect the occupants of a lonely country house to be a little upset when you arrive uninvited at their door, but this is ridiculous. The accident which caused your car to crash and knock you unconscious was hardly your fault after all. And where has your younger brother disappeared to? He must have gone into the old house before you to seek help, but there is no sign of him

here in the entrance hall. Perhaps you should try upstairs - I think I heard something scrape across the floor. Or was it more like a slither? Either way you had better find him quickly and get out of here fast. The sun is sinking behind the trees and dinner time is fast approaching, who knows who will be



having what to eat!

This is the second graphic adventure from the Mindscape team and

Without question this game is a classy piece of work. The sound and graphics have been put together most professionally and together they create just the right atmosphere for the creepy plot. The actual mechanics of everything work smoothly and have been well thought out.

My only hesitation about wholeheartedly recommending the package concerns the logic of the problems to be overcome in the actual solving of the game. Most of the game can be viewed quite easily as the puzzles will not prevent you from moving quite freely around the house. However, when it comes to actually solving the riddles, these can be baffling. The game contains a bewildering number of objects which serve no useful purpose. Add to this the fact that magic is a central ingredient to the game, and this means that seemingly illogical acts can have strange consequences. The result could have you tearing your hair out! Part-time adventurers will love to see the graphics and listen to the sound effects, but it will take a seasoned and dedicated puzzle-hound to sniff out the solutions to some of the tricky traps in this cat's cradle.

AM

KEYBOARD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
JOYSTICK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MOUSE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

it follows in the footsteps of the Deja Vu adventure, and precedes last month's Shadowgate game which was released out of sequence. Like its illustrious predecessors, this adventure is totally mouse controlled and permits the player to manipulate a host of objects within the main graphic screen.

The main central window shows your current location and within this you are free to point the mouse cursor at any object which you may then examine, open, operate or move.

Lifting the object into the left-hand Inventory screen will allow you to examine it more closely. This screen

operates like a normal Atari 'window' which may be enlarged, shrunk or deleted. Opening any object, such as a bag, will cause yet another window to be created, just like examining the contents of a folder file. If the contents of your inventory become cluttered, a simple 'tidy' command will cause the game to shuffle the objects into a neat layout for your perusal.

Above the graphic screens is a Command Window containing the commonly used words which may be selected and combined to make up your instructions. To light a candle you may simply point at the match, select OPERATE and then point at the candle. This sequence would cause the candle to flare into life and transform the match into a charred ember.

Moving between the rooms may be achieved by either pointing at the required doorway on the main screen or by using the same method on the right-hand Exits window which more clearly shows the possible exits from the current location. The pull down menus are available for extra com-

mands, such as, game saving and loading.

In addition to the static graphics many screens contain animation sequences, such as, scuttling spiders and lightning flashes. Digitised sound

are to be found and these give hints to the dark deeds performed in the recent past. A book of magic will also give clues on the creation of spells which are essential in the solving of the house's secrets.

Perhaps after your long journey you are feeling a little peckish? The flesh-eating Zombies in the garden maze will help you dig up something which will 'meat' with your approval. Or perhaps you would like to bump into the beautiful Scarlet who is hanging about in the hall and is simply dying to meet you. Time and madness prey upon your mind as you race the clock to wrest your brother from the forces which hold him prisoner, and if the horrifying graphics don't send you to bed early, the unearthly sound effects will.



effects have been added which include creaking doors and bloodcurdling screams, both of which are guaranteed to make you wish you had begun to play the game before everyone else had gone to bed! The room descriptions and the game responses are given in the bottom scrolling window and these contain lots of clever and witty text.

The old house has been used by black magicians and evidence of their work is everywhere. Bottles and boxes of strange substances litter the bedrooms and studies. The cupboards are crammed with household objects from Spider-Cider to old brooms. And who knows which are innocent household utensils and which are used in unholy rites? Many diaries and letters

STA

STA
Rating

72%

GRAPHICS / TEXT: 80%
GAMEPLAY: 68%

ORIGINALITY: 70%
ADDICTIVENESS: 68%

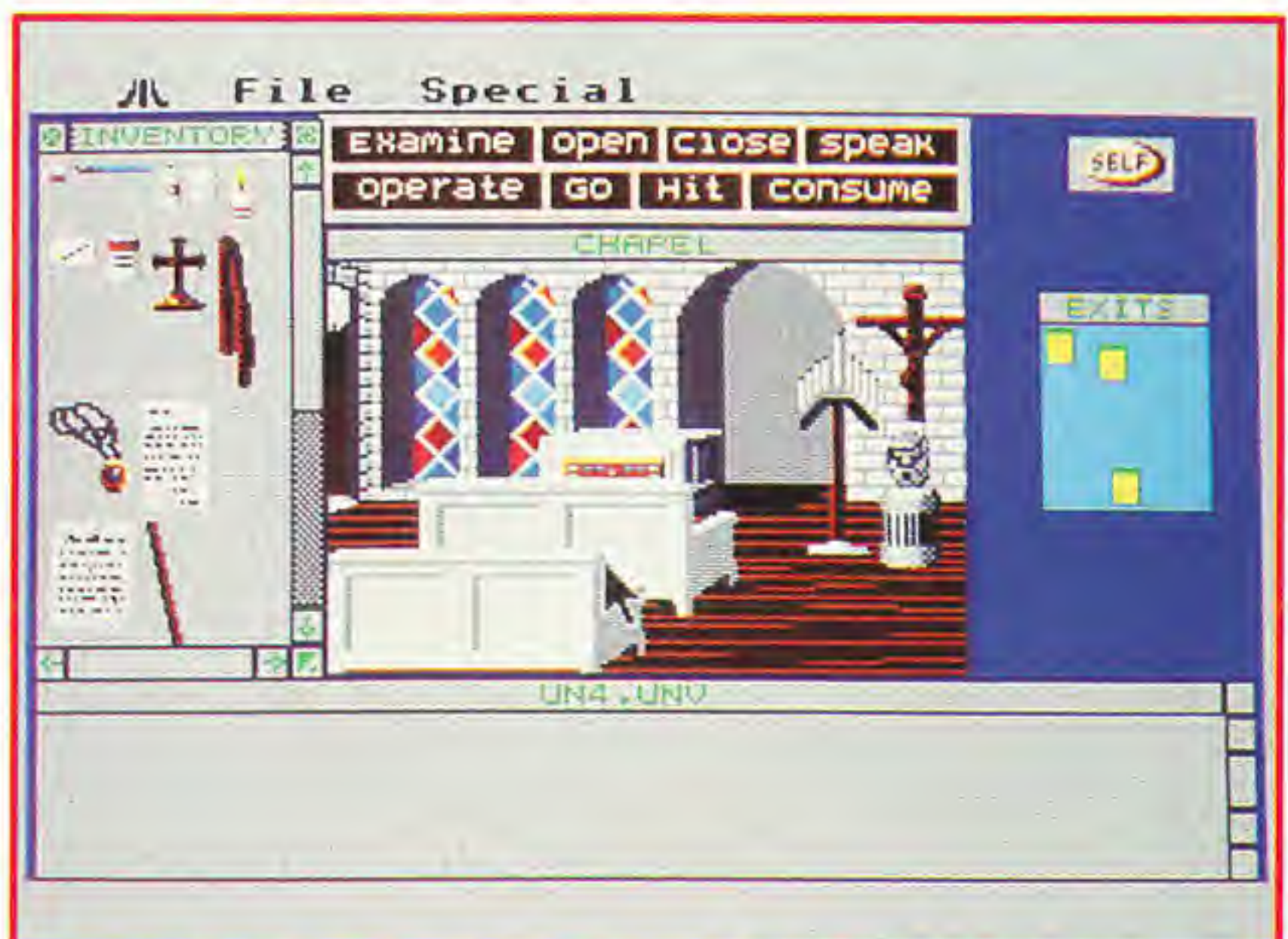
Send for the hints sheet! By the time it arrives you'll be glad you sent for it. This game is in the very difficult league, the logic for some of the puzzles I found to be tenuous. On the other hand, the graphics are very good as is the sound.

One of the features I particularly liked was the inclusion of items that aren't necessarily of any use in solving the adventure. These items were there as window dressing and made the story a bit more complete. I mean, if you went into a bathroom you'd expect to find soap, towels etc.

One feature I've come to dislike, and this applies to many other adventure games, is the location that kills you off for carrying out the wrong action without even giving you a hint that the situation could be lethal, e.g., the hidden pit, move the wrong object - dead. Maybe I'm just not clever enough for this game.

To end on a high note, don't play the game with the sound turned up too loud, the game uses some interesting sound effects, even if sometimes they are a bit late in coming. I especially like the song, find out for yourself where it's played.

SK



The usual Mindscape iconic system is of course present. The menu bar at the top, to the right of the screen a window showing objects in your possession, on the right, a map shows possible exits, centre is the location window and at the bottom, the text window (no text in this example!).

CRACKED

ATARI (£14.95)

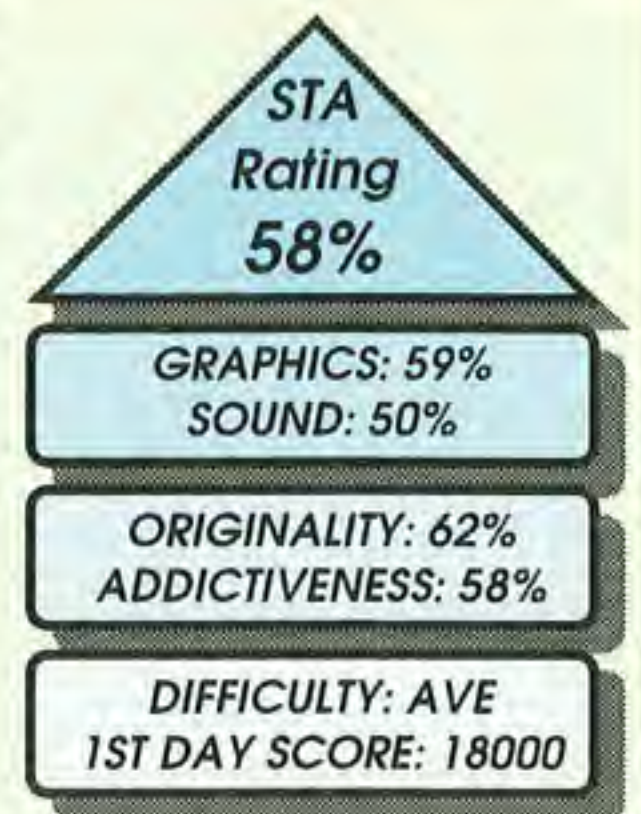
This month, like every month, had its usual quota of gratuitously violent games and so it was a refreshing change to have a laugh, courtesy of Atari. Cracked, is one of those rare games that is abundant in fun and entertainment, without having to rely on death and destruction. You won't need much 'egging' on to enjoy this game, as it has one simple aim: to protect a batch of eggs from a menagerie of egg snatchers. The first section of the game is called 'The Old Yolk Tree' - they get worse!

The game-screen shows a large tree with six egg-filled nests perched precariously on various branches and as many again scattered on the foreground. The mouse moves and activates a set of cross-hair sights which represent the sights of a rifle. As the various egg snatchers enter the screen, you must swiftly aim the sights at the varmints and click the left-hand button to shoot. Comical crows fly swiftly across the screen, swoop on a nest and make a grab for an egg. Points are scored by shooting the birds before they reach a nest, but a large bonus

can be gained if you risk allowing the culprit to successfully grab the egg and then shoot the bird as it flies over another nest. Judged correctly, the egg should fall safely into a nest, but if it drops to the ground, you lose one of your batch - and that's no 'yolk'! Fat, slow-moving owls join the snatch from the air, while snakes continuously slither on screen, grab the eggs from the vulnerable ground-based nests and swallow them.



The eggs that you saved from the first level are transported to the next section of the game, which is called Rooster Ranch! The screen shows a chicken coop which has been invaded by a rooster. As the cockerel pokes his head out of one of the hatches, two arrows at the base and side of the screen must be aligned on the hatchway and clicking the mouse button launches an egg at the infiltrator. Next, the remaining eggs are placed on a network of drainpipes and a completely different menagerie of urban-dwelling critters engage in egg snatching. Again, the gun-sights must be trailed across the screen and



aimed at the yolky yeggs before they steal your rapidly decreasing supply of eggs. Additionally, bonus levels between the main sections of the game have been included with no apparent link to the egg theme. For instance, 'Twenty Thousand Eggs Under the Sea' takes you down to the watery depths to shoot at fishes, squids and rising bubbles.

Cracked is an excellent source of lighthearted entertainment, although emphasis has been placed on comic relief rather than long-term challenge. Nevertheless, if you miss the opportunity to play this hilarious little game, the 'yolk' will be on you!

KILLDOZER

LANKHOR (£19.95)



Killdozer's accompanying synopsis explains that the game is set in an era of fanatic robotics and that 'Unicom', the most powerful computer in the world, has gone mad. The task is to infiltrate a six-floor factory complex, which consists of 150 rooms, and rescue an engineer from every floor. Each engineer has a code which enables you to move to the next level and so their rescue is of paramount importance.

You have the choice of four tanks to use in the mission and you can endow the the vehicle with greater speed and impenetrable armour during the course of the game. Additionally, you can change your weaponry to suit a particular situation by pressing one of the first three Function keys. Each 'F' key activates vitality sapping missiles, weaponry-eradicating shells which absorb the enemy's firepower and armour piercing

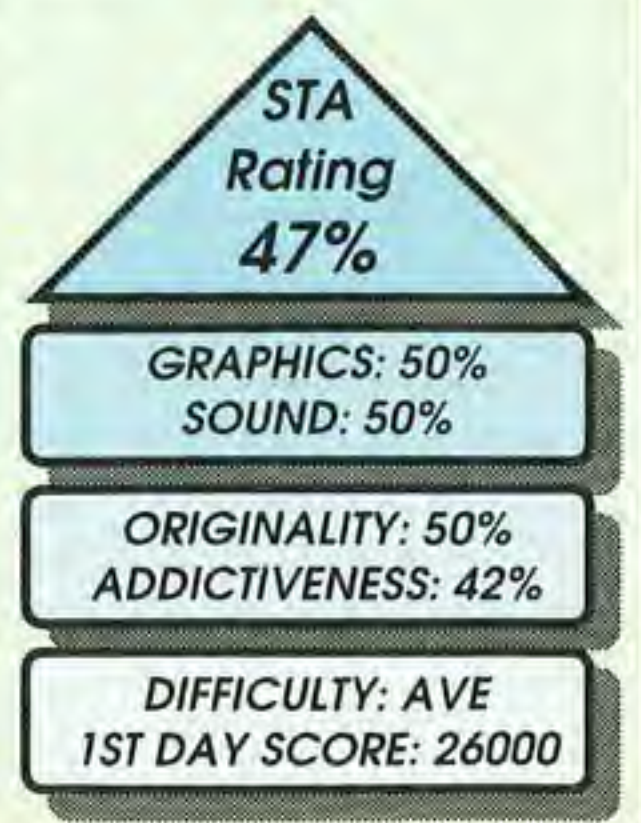
missiles, which can be employed to penetrate the densest armour protection. Naturally, the emphasis that you place on the speed of the tank, its weaponry power and armour strength determines the difficulty of the game.

The mission begins outside the factory gates and the screen reveals an overhead view of the terrain, with your tank parked in a narrow road. Nudging the joystick causes the tank to face in the corresponding direction and maintaining pressure in that direction makes it move. As the tank emerges into the open, you are immediately confronted by a weird collection of hostile machinery. Purple spheres impede your progress and reduce the tank's vitality on contact, while manic machines rotate like crazed tennis-practice machines which fire projectiles that pursue the tank until you move out of the vicinity. In addition to the destructive powers of your various weaponry, shooting the occasional box of dynamite destroys all the enemy in the visible vicinity.

The Unicom machinery possess the same weaponry as you and can also change them at random - the skill is to match the intelligence of the computer in weaponry selection. Each level contains a token selection of evil

machines which impede your search for the engineers. But your task is made considerably easier by absorbing phials which contain various coloured liquids that signify the fortifying characteristics described earlier. On reaching the final level, you must locate and destroy the Unicom - but there is an unexpected twist in the tale!

Add an easy-to-use Killdozer screen construction kit to this seemingly original game and you might think it contains all the necessary ingredients to warrant a purchase. But there is something lacking in the content of the game which fails to inspire and maintain your interest. Sadly, Killdozer is more a 'dozer' than a 'killer'!





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"In the latter part of the twentieth century the British research team, Maincore Computer Development, together with a group of eminent European scientists conceived the starship Pandora."

PANDORA

FIREBIRD (£19.95)

The ship was piloted by a mixed crew of both humans and droids. Designed to support all lifeforms indefinitely, the ship drifted through the uncharted depths of space on its mission to seek out alien life forms. The ship itself was controlled and monitored by a seventh-generation computer, the Pandora system, after which the spaceship was named.

The design brief under which the Pandora system was constructed was simple: the system's capabilities had to surpass that of any other computer - past, present or, indeed, future. During the huge machine's construction one of its major components, the Bio-Rhythmic Stabilizers, could not be tested under alien conditions. The research team were of the opinion that the de-stabilization of the component could lead to pseudo-aggressive tendencies, resulting in the computer contravening its very objectives! However, the research team were quick to point out that this situation was very unlikely to occur.

Now in the twenty-second century, Pandora has been searching the outer limits of deep space for nearly two hundred years. Here on Earth the Maincore team have been constantly monitoring the starship's progress. But now, rather than roaming the outer limits, Pandora seems to be heading back home. Speculation regarding the success of Pandora's mission is rife in the popular press. The ship's intentions are still not known, and neither

are the contents of its vast cargo hold.

You, an intergalactic salvage operator, have been assigned the task of boarding the starship Pandora. The success of your mission will be gauged on the number of alien artefacts you manage to salvage and return to Earth for analysis.

I loaded the game by double-clicking on the .prg file; why do so many games still have to be manually booted? After a short wait, the screen changed to

After getting over my initial confusion, I quite enjoyed wandering around the good ship Pandora. The game is large and the interaction of the other characters is well done.

The exchanging of items takes a while to get the hang of, and the fighting sequence is very, if you'll excuse the pun, "hit and miss". This, coupled with the fact that you cannot save your position, makes any progress very difficult.

Though I quite enjoyed this, it wasn't long before I was looking for something else to load; I know it is cliched but do try before you buy.

SM



They think of everything in these modern space cruisers - there is even a squash court!

show a well-presented, out-of-the-cockpit view of a starfield with the games title colourfully displayed at the top of the screen. Whilst I travelled what must have been several light years, the game merrily played its jolly soundtrack. I sat and listened to this pleasant ditty whilst I perused the game's manual. Pandora's inlay card is well written and covers all aspects of the gameplay in great detail. I say the instructions are well written because I usually scan through the details, play the game, and then read the instructions in full. With hindsight, I can safely say that I was glad I did read the instructions as the game can become quite complex, especially when interaction with other characters is called for.

After readying myself, I depressed the space-bar and waited. My character, clad in a bright orange spacesuit, appeared on Star Trek-type transporter pad. Moving from this area proved to be fatal; however, after waiting I was soon approached by a starship employee. For some unknown reason this poor fellow disintegrated before my very eyes; I swiped his ID card and thus allowed myself access to further areas of the ship.

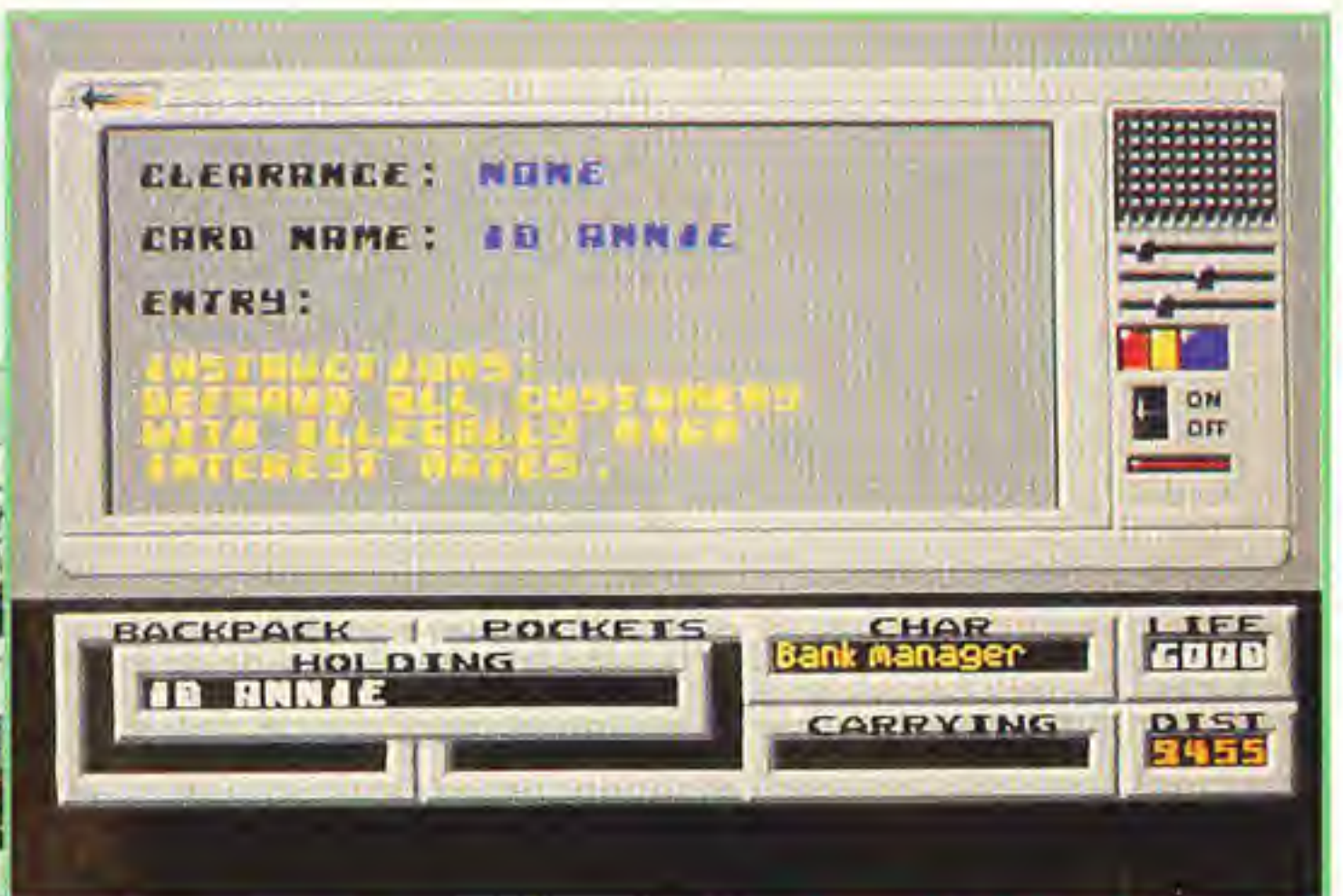
My first encounter was with a rather nasty punk-type character and this Uridium mace-wielding fellow must have had it in for me right from the very start. After crossing his path the vicious thug started to lay into me, the screen showed a cloud of dust with fists and feet flying out off it. Accompanying the scene were Batman-style biffs and kapows, all of which helped to add to the cartoon feel of the game. Winning a fight is not easy,



As you scroll through the long corridors and passageways of the spaceship Pandora, you'll find everything from a computer room to a chapel

KEYBOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
JOYSTICK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
MOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

You find a computer terminal in one of the numerous well equipped rooms - you log-on and start to probe the machine's data banks which contain information on many a shady deal.



timing is essential and it also helps to have a weapon on hand.

Interacting with characters is of paramount importance if you want to

Firebird's latest ST release, Pandora, had me a little sceptical at first. After perusing the packaging and reading the legend "Pandora - dare you open the box...?" I gingerly booted up the game. To my surprise, Pandora, although sometimes quite tricky, turned out to be a rather interesting game. The arcade feel combined with the more adventure-orientated ideas all helped to make Pandora a worthwhile game. Pandora will keep its players busy for sometime, and although I played the game for over two hours, I never actually managed to get past the level of "Dog-Meat"! I recommend Pandora to anyone remotely interested in the arcade/adventure-style games.

NC

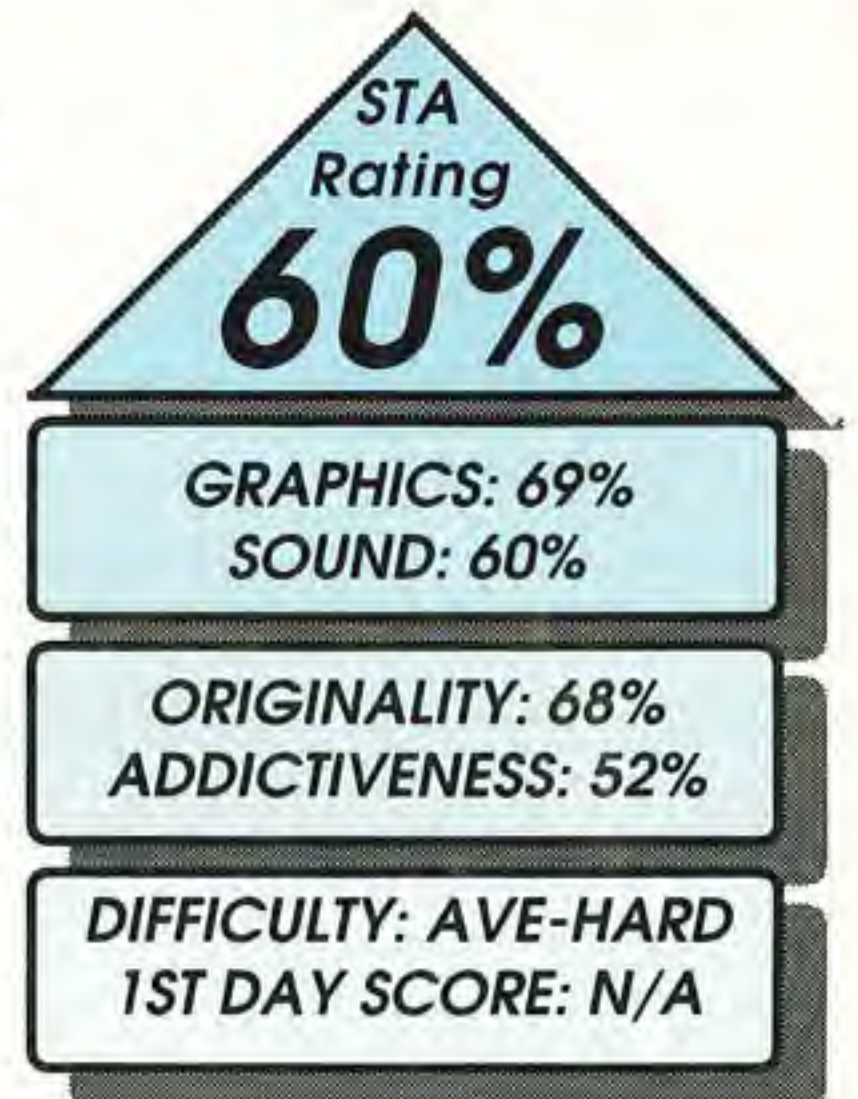
Yuk! I don't like this one bit. I've persevered with the game to try and see whether it gets any better the more I get into it, but I just seem to get nowhere fast. What is even more annoying is the fact that there is no 'save game' option to save the hassle of repeating the initial moves of the game each time you die. However, I think that if this was included, the game would be finished within a couple of hours. Pandora appears to be a 'dressed-up' adventure game, but fails dismally. Buy a can of Dulux, brush it on the wall and watch it dry - it's more interesting than Pandora.

MM

succeed with this game. Trading objects becomes an important part of the gameplay and many characters will possess items needed to complete the game. Short of killing these characters the only way of obtaining these items is to swap them. When approached, these people will give some clue as to what items they would be willing to trade their wares for.

Items may also be found around the complex, either on worktops around the starship or on various dead bodies. ID cards are of great importance. Cards should be carried in the player's hand to allow access to more delicate areas. The problem comes when the player has to decide which are the alien artefacts, the game does not differentiate between normal items and the so-called artefacts. I, therefore, found myself dropping more useful items down into the salvage chute, thus hampering any further progress of the game.

Graphically and aurally, Pandora is a very pleasant game, somewhat reminiscent of FTL's Sundog - the frozen legacy. To sum up, Pandora is a good interactive



space game that will require both complex puzzle solving and arcade action.

Interesting.

STA



You might seek safe sanctuary in the chapel, but this don't look like no friendly Parish Vicar!

BEYOND THE ICE PALACE

(£19.99)

"Legend has it that beyond the Ice Palace and to the north lies a strange mystical land. A land of magic and fantasy, of good and evil, of ghosts and goblins."

Just recently, however, the homes, and indeed lives, of the simple woodcutters have been cast into turmoil. A great upset in the balance of power between good and evil has seen the evil spirits grow strong. Now, stronger than ever before, the evil powers have turned on the helpless folk and in their wake they have laid waste the once proud forests of the land.

The humble woodcutters looked to the forces of good for guidance and help during their time of trouble. So needy were the woodcutters' pleas that the great spirits of the woods, their own future now at stake, held an urgent meeting. A decision

was made that a single person would have to defeat the evil spirits, forcing them out of the woods and back from where they came. A sacred arrow was blessed with the powers of the woods and then flung into the air. Whosoever would find the arrow would not only be blessed with its magical powers, but also find himself on an adventure of paramount importance!

Now, it just so happened that one fine day you had been out hunting and after searching for your catch you stumbled upon a strange looking arrow. Taking the fragile item in your grasp, you felt a strange aura envelop your whole body. Now knowing your destiny you must set off on this fantastic mission to save the woods and restore order throughout the land.

After their last two releases, Ikari Warriors and the brilliant Buggy Boy, Elite have decided to offer us Beyond the Ice Palace. Ah, and what a relief it is to be free of arcade conversions! But, before you all start thinking that "Ice Palace" is totally free from any coin-op influences, then think again. Elite were responsible for the conversion of Capcom's "Ghosts and Goblins" and this latest title echoes strong overtones of it's predecessor.

Your character, looking something like a Twisted Sister clone, runs throughout the forest locations happily wasting any evil nasties that try to hinder his progress. Dotted around the locations can be found a number of extra weapons: daggers, swords and chain-maces. Collection of a new

When I first started playing this, the difficulty level seemed too hard, and the urge to give in was strong. But after a while, I found that the aliens followed set patterns and that, by using these, progress was easier.

Although it is quite playable, there are several annoying points in the game; such as nasties firing before you get a chance and, in particular, knocking you off the rising platforms.

Basically, this is simple arcade fare and adequate fodder for platform fans.

SM



STA
Rating

58%

GRAPHICS: 55%
SOUND: 55%

ORIGINALITY: 47%
ADDICTIVENESS: 55%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 27500

weapon causes our hero to utilize this new item; I found swords to be the most useful. In times of need you may wish to call upon the spirits of the woods. Summoning these immortal beings causes one of their smiling faces to sweep across the screen killing any horrors that block their path. Extra faces can be collected en-route as can a number of gems, which simply help to boost your score.

Many nasties are encountered, including a rather irritating demon who seems to pop up just at the wrong moments. Levels are guarded by more ferocious beings which require plenty of direct hits before they finally fade away allowing further progress to be made. The graphics are bold and quite well drawn; the sound too, is just as you would expect for a game of this type.

After the success of their last two titles, Elite seem to have taken a bold stand in offering us "Ice Palace". Fans of the original "Ghosts and Goblins" should be delighted with it.

STA

Beyond the Ice Palace is very reminiscent of the coin-op "Ghosts and Goblins", and having enjoyed that game I felt quite at home with this title. Constant attacks from the evil hordes had my little fellow leaping about drawing his weapon relentlessly. Graphically, "Ice Palace" is well drawn and successfully uses larger characters than the original. The sound, too, is well performed and seems to fit in with the general atmosphere of the game. Elite certainly won't have a huge hit on their hands, but I'm sure "Ghosts and Goblins" fans will enjoy it.

NC



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"Let's face it, after the book, the record and the video, the computer game is the final format and last-ditch attempt to squeeze extra revenue out of a movie.

In the past, this has been an excuse for unscrupulous software companies to put the name of a movie to a game which bears only the vaguest resemblance. But can Ocean disprove my scepticism with *Platoon*?"

Mile after mile of jungle maze to negotiate before you find the all important explosives. Watch out for enemy troops and trip wires.



PLATOON

OCEAN (£19.95)

'The first casualty of war is innocence', was the poignant message of the movie, and if the craziness in Vietnam proved anything, it was the utter futility of war. The game-screen shows a horizontally-scrolling jungle scene, which at first sight could be confused with Predator, (reviewed in the May edition of STA). 'Take control of your commando', a message on the status display exclaims, and grasping the joystick, the controls become immediately apparent. The commando sets off at a brisk pace, or should I say he remains in the centre of the screen while the screen scrolls. The field of vision is relatively small and the Vietcong's effective camouflage make them dangerously inconspicuous. Charlie is everywhere in the jungle and your first confrontation occurs within the first five seconds of the game. The

distance that enemy fire can reach is considerably further than the field of vision and so your commando can be shot by an unseen source. When the commando currently under your control is seriously wounded or dies, you must transfer control to one of the remaining members in the platoon.

The majority of the Vietcong approach your commando on foot and you have a split second to turn and fire.

To avoid the

fire, pulling back on the joystick makes him crouch down, while pushing upwards

causes him to jump three times his height. The jungle is split up into sections and you soon come to the end of the first clearing which is marked by an impenetrable tree. By now you will have noticed paths leading from the main route, and when the commando is near one of these paths, the joystick changes from activating jumping and crouching to moving him to the adjacent section of jungle. This complex of paths makes this a labyrinthian jungle and, without a map or compass, your task is to find the correct route to a village.

Booby-trapped trip-wires are a constant concern and the enemy foot patrols are backed up by snipers who emerge from concealed hides in the ground and guerrillas which jump from trees. The first objective in this section is to find a box of explosives and locate a bridge. TNT in your possession, simply crossing the bridge automatically plants the device, thus preventing an enemy patrol from catching your platoon. Your morale is indicated at the base of the screen by hearts which decrease each time a member of the platoon is wounded or killed. However, finding medical supplies, a morale booster and weaponry can be replenished with ammunition supplies.

After crossing the bridge, the commando must be moved swiftly into the jungle in order to find the village. On locating the village, the search for a torch and map must take immediate precedence, as

Congratulations must surely go to Ocean for producing such an atmospheric game. With a licence such as this the temptation might have been to program another "Commando" game to add to the existing pile.

The six stages are varied enough to keep any gamers interested, ranging from the brilliant tunnel sequence to the immensely difficult Sergeant Barnes. I have only one minor gripe which is that, on the first level, you can be killed when no enemy is present on the screen.

A difficult game, and one that will take many hours of practice. I can only round off by saying that *Platoon* - the game - deserves to win as many Oscars as the film did. Buy it now!

SM

both items play a crucial role in the following section of the game. The commando must gain access to the huts and a thorough search must take place. Once inside, you can see hidden detail within the hut and pushing the joystick forwards enables you to examine the objects. When both the map and torch are in your possession, the search is on for a trap door which leads to an underground tunnel system. The map that was found in the village, which just happens to be a detailed diagram of the tunnel system, appears on screen so that you can plot your progress. The tunnel section is played through your commando's eyes and Charlie constantly appears from dark corners or emerges from the water brandishing a dagger. Your main objective

This is one of those games that you will buy and, like Xenon, wait impatiently for someone to come up with a cheat mode. The game itself is rather good, with the exception of almost 0-bit standard graphics and minimal sound - but the gameplay is there (something largely missing these days in software). However, it is so difficult the caption that goes with the game ('The first casualty of war is innocence') should read 'The first casualty of Platoon is patience'. Buy it and then wait for Mark Lawrence to make life easier.

MM

in the tunnel network is to find more supplies and ammunition, as well as flares and a compass, which are essential items for the next section of the game. But Charlie has booby-trapped some of the boxes and there is only one way to find out which boxes contain supplies and which conceal a nasty surprise.

Positioned at the exit from the tunnel is a bunker and the chance to recoup some energy. However, Charlie has other ideas and a group of Vietcong have anticipated your arrival. The flares which were collected in the tunnel network can be used to light up the night sky, which highlights the enemy's position. While

If you get to the bridge without first finding the explosives you'll be invited to a barbecue - unfortunately you're being served as the main course!



Charlie is illuminated by the flares, you can aim the cross-hair sights at the silhouettes and fire. Every man must be eliminated before you can move, as the flash from the gun has given your position away.

After a sleepless night, the search is on for your platoon leader, Sergeant Elias. But, you are informed by Sergeant Barnes that Elias has been killed in action. However, further on in the jungle you witness an animation sequence of Elias being pursued and shot by a patrol - why did Barnes lie? The conclusion is that by not aiding him, Barnes is indirectly responsible for Elias's demise and therefore cannot be trusted. Suddenly, you receive a radio message on screen from headquarters ordering all personnel to evacuate the area immediately, as a napalm attack is imminent. The report ends by giving the compass bearings of a safe area and you have two minutes to take cover. The compass which was found in the tunnels appears at the base of the screen and indicates which way you are facing.

Maintaining a northerly direction, each screen that you run through shows a different part of the jungle and there are several possible routes - only a few, however, will take you to safety in time. Barnes has already dug down in the foxhole and, as you approach, he realizes that you are suspicious of him. From the safety of the foxhole, the wayward Sergeant dishes out a hail of bullets and grenades and the only course of action is to dodge the fire and attack with grenades.

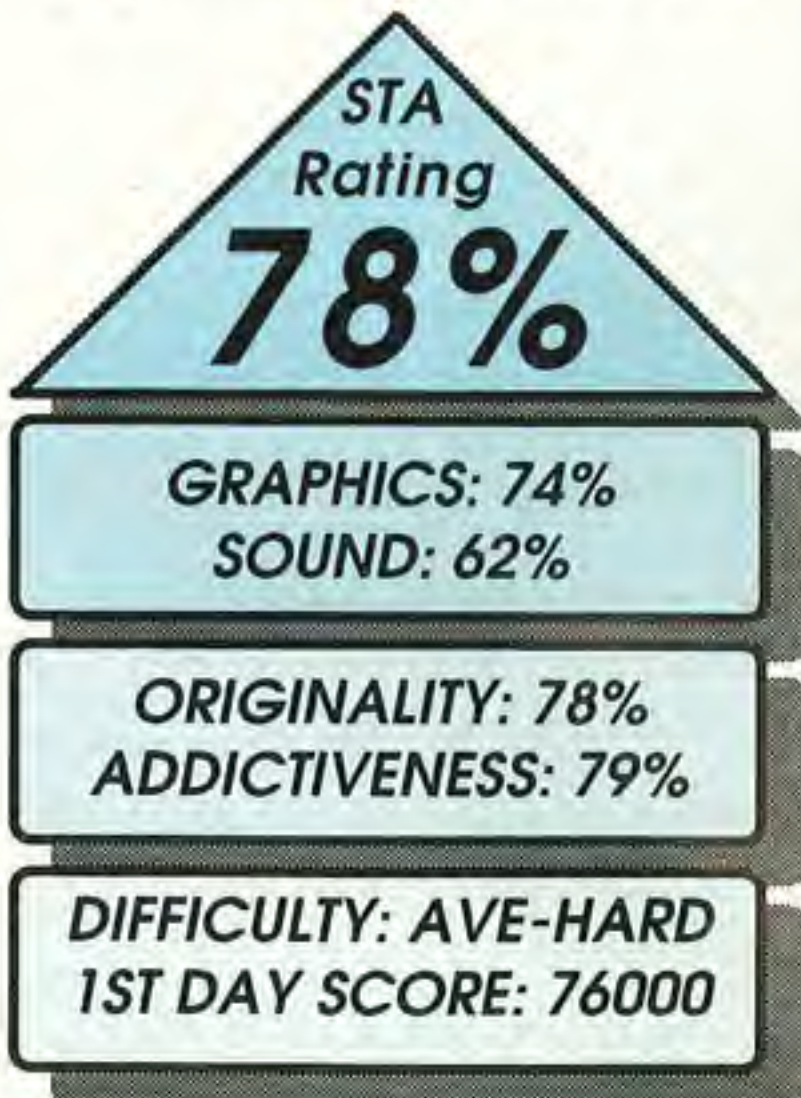
Five direct hits are required to render the foxhole vacant for your occupation.

STA

KEYBOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JOYSTICK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOUSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You don't just play this game, you experience a tiny fraction of the fear and terror which I should imagine is constantly present in warfare. To say Platoon is absorbing is an understatement, as the challenge is constant and one slip of concentration is disastrous. As described, every section of the battle is fought from a different perspective and the game-play actually gets better as you progress. I rarely enthuse about a military combat game, but this is an exception! Have Ocean refuted my opening statement? You bet!

JS



You find a small village (left) - you must search inside the huts (right) for a map and a trap door which leads to an underground tunnel system

QUADRALIEN

LOGOTRON (£19.99)

"Logotron's last release on the ST was XOR, a fine program in its own right. Now, to follow up their success, Logotron, in association with Astral Software, have produced Quadralien."

With this latest release it seems that the company have taken a long, hard look at their previous product and improved upon its weaker areas. While continuing the same style of play, Quadralien has vastly improved graphics and sound, and a much more convincing story-line behind it.

Time has marched forward to the middle of the twenty-first century and, as in so many games just lately, the Earth is facing a massive energy crisis. It seems that all the Earth's natural resources have been exploited to the full and now man must turn to other methods of energy production. After much deliberation the world's most eminent scientists decided that nuclear power was still the most efficient method of production. This decision, however, was met with a great deal of scepticism by the people. After the many disasters concerning nuclear power stations over the years were reviewed, it was recognized that a huge nuclear space station would provide both the optimum conditions required for such massive power production, and the safety needed by mankind.

The huge space station was completed and positioned in orbit around the Earth, the power problem

seemed finally to be at an end. The fully-automatic station was not, unfortunately, protected against any would-be alien attacks, largely due to the lack of knowledge concerning

tended for the Earth for its own upkeep. The alien is not believed to be hostile, but there is a risk of the reactor overheating and the station blowing up, not to mention the crippling effect the lack of power is having upon the Earth.

You have been assigned a space transporter and six robots. Your mission is to dock at the space station, and to either destroy or dispatch the alien lifeform. The alien is apparently situated at the very core of the station, and you must complete three levels before reaching this final encounter. The whole world depends on your success. Good luck!

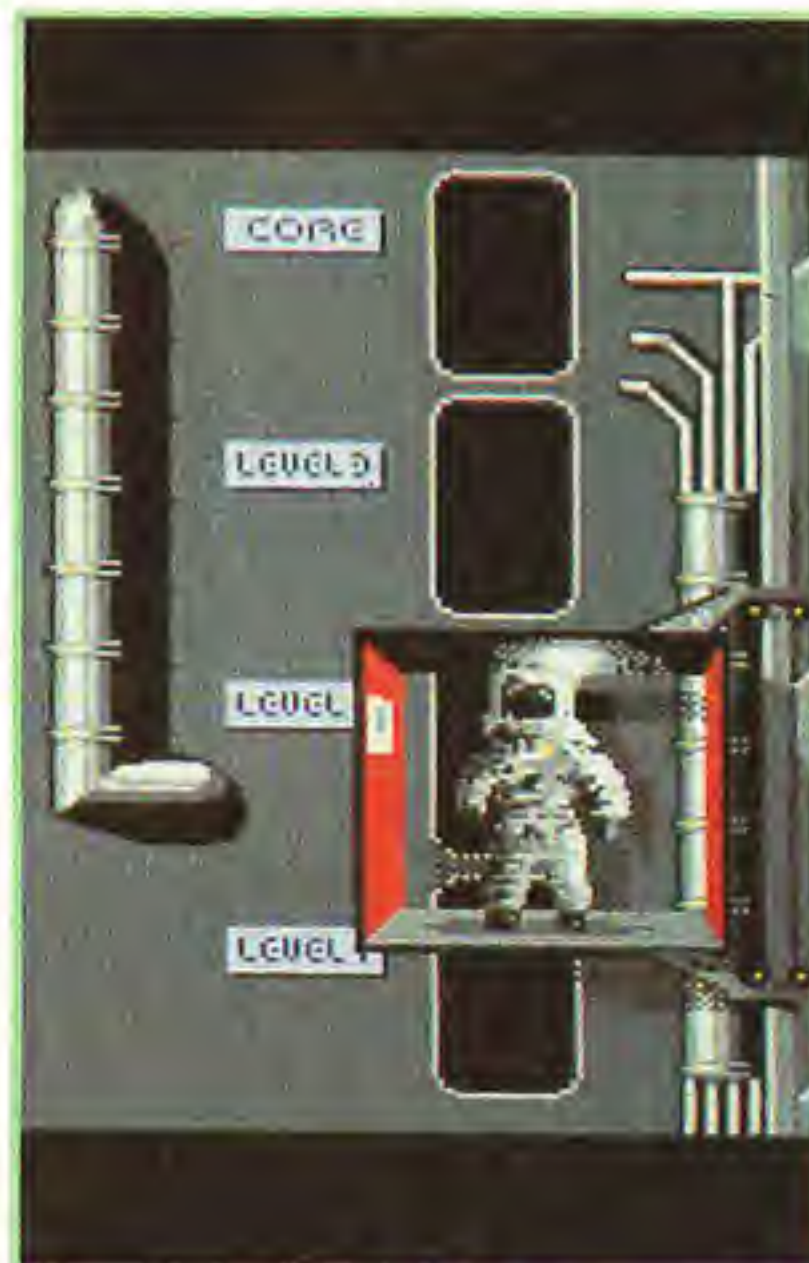
A player may only use two of his six robots on each level; each robot has its strong and weak points, so deciding on

the correct combination is essential. After deciding on the pair of robots needed, a player may also decide in which room to start the mission, there being six rooms on each level. On



Robot screen, successful completion of future levels depends on a careful selection here

other life-forms. It now seems that some alien form has infiltrated the station and is using the power in-



KEYBOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JOYSTICK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOUSE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COLOUR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
520ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1040ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

STA
Rating
67%

GRAPHICS: 67%
SOUND: 60%

ORIGINALITY: 73%
ADDICTIVENESS: 63%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 7500

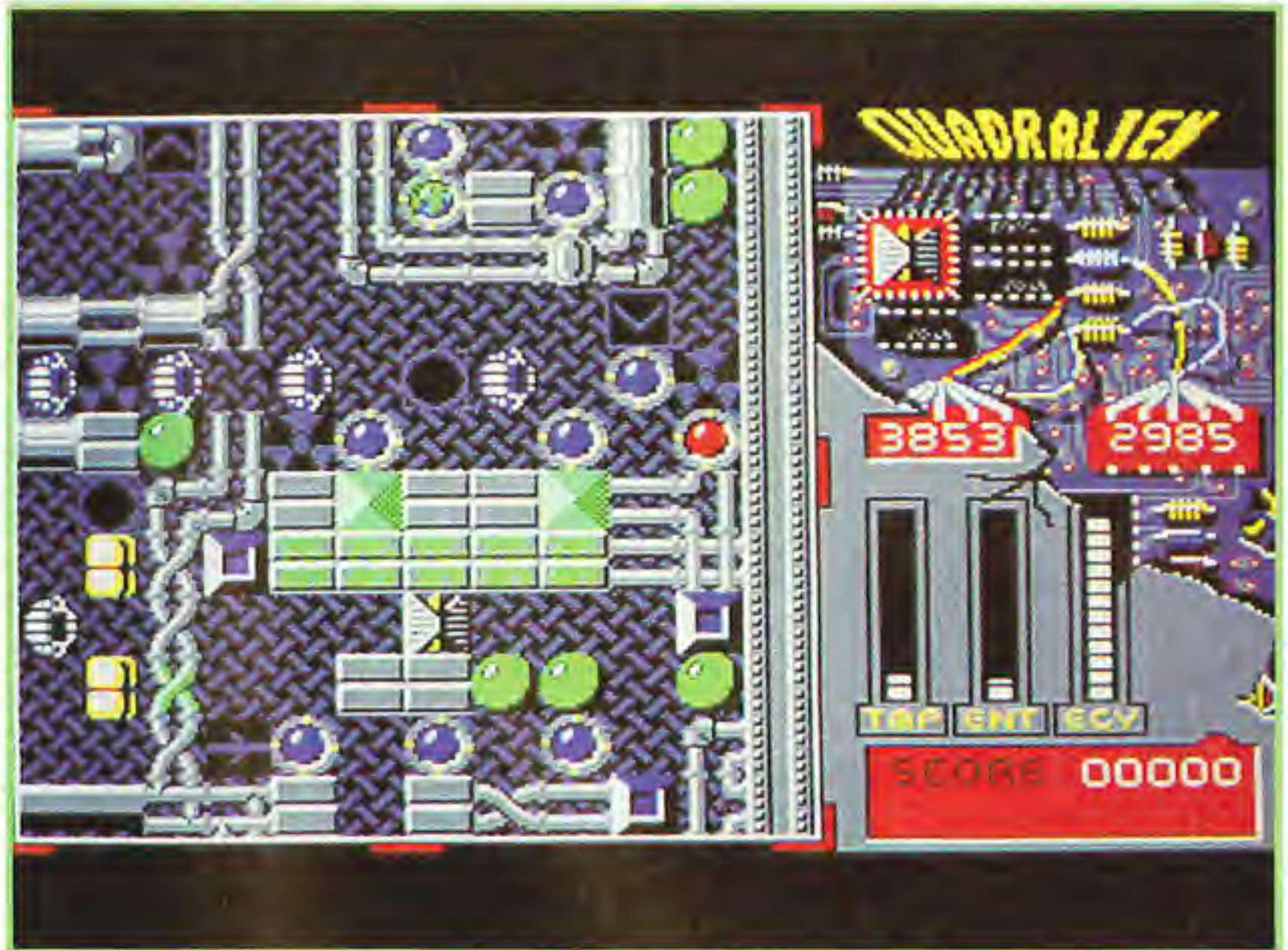
Initial appearances put some buyers off Logotron's predecessor XOR. With this though, they have made a better looking and sounding game.

It plays just like XOR, except you now have the ability to fire. This is the game's major downfall. XOR was a good idea, and the logical progression is to build and improve on it. Instead, the game is prettier, but more of a shoot-and-collect job, without the puzzles and strategy which make XOR so good.

That said, XOR was an excellent game and so is this. It's just that I am a little disappointed with the similarity between the two. Still, if you don't have the latter, then go out and buy Quadralien. If you do, then try before you buy.

SM

Ready to absorb, the droid positions itself beneath a contaminated wall



starting the game a player must enter level one; subsequent levels may be accessed by submitting the necessary code acquired at the end of the previous level.

Control of the two robots is toggled by a simple key depression and a player will find himself using both units regularly. The general idea of the game is to destroy the radioactive elements within the rooms whilst maintaining the station's stability at normal. This task can become quite hectic as a player rushes around cleaning up the contamination and also tries to keep the core at a manageable level. The up keep of the

robots is also necessary, battery recharge and unit scrub facilities are both, therefore, available at the information squares dotted around the rooms.

I loathed Logotron's first game, XOR. Although the gameplay was good and the general idea a very sound one, the program itself never seemed to capture me in the way it should. Quadralien revisits Logotron's original idea and improves upon it tremendously. The improved graphics, sound and features make this a highly enjoyable game. I loved every minute of it and think that Quadralien deserves a special place in my software collection. If you enjoyed the likes of XOR, or even Boulderdash, then get Quadralien. If you prefer a faster-scrolling shoot'em-up, try it anyway - you'll be pleasantly surprised!

NC

The game would be simple if it were not for the various elements contained within the station. Explosive charges, one-way corridors, attractive and repulsive droids all help make the game something special. Aliens occur on levels two and three, and whilst their presence is not harmful to the robots, they do

tend to get in the way either by blocking your path or by moving

Not bad, but not that good - that's my verdict of Quadralien. The game is initially appealing, but quickly loses the player's interest with repetitive game action. The sound, along with the graphics, are slightly better than average, but these fail to raise it above the fairly humdrum level of gameplay. Vague controls add to the confusion. Save your money.

MM

objects around the rooms. The four-hearted Quadralien Mother creature can be found at the core and with a little thought she is easily disposed of.

Logotron's Quadralien bears striking similarities to the wonderful XOR, and like its forefather, Quadralien is fiendishly difficult. Having a couple of pages of tips helped me, but less fortunate players will have to depend on their skill and brain-power when playing this hybrid maze game.

STA



Quadralien's Trust House Forte - just the job for a scrub and recharge

Note the radioactive spillage on the floor, tap it up

STARFLEET

ELECTRONIC ARTS (£24.95)

"You have completed your training at the Academy. Now is the time to take command of one of the most powerful craft in the Universe and set out to hunt the warships of the invading Krellan Empire. The War Begins!"

In this space strategy game, you are placed in command of a star cruiser fitted with multiple computer systems. These systems include Navigation, Damage Control, Weapon Systems and Shield Control. The screen display gives a permanent view from the Long Range Scanner and this shows the stars, starbases and enemy craft in the surrounding star quadrants. This galaxy map is shown as a grid upon which three-figure numbers represent the totals of the aforementioned objects. You may move across this map using hyperdrive engines or in short hops via the auxiliary engines.

The top-right display gives an indication of the state of the ship's defensive shields. The bottom-right screen shows the Tactical Display which is mainly taken up with the Short Range Scanner Display showing the ships and stars in your immediate vicinity. In this case, tiny icons are used to represent the ships and bases. Also displayed is the status of various systems, such as, power levels, current space coordinates and weapon stocks.

Weapons include Phasors, Torpedos, Tractor Beams and Mines. These weapons may be fired at enemy ships using either computer-aided targeting or manual control. The graphics used during the battle sequences are quite simplistic although the torpedos are shown moving over the grid as they home in on the enemy craft. Additionally, you may transport space marines into the very heart of the enemy ships to overpower the Krellan crews and bring the ship under

your control.

If at this point you have a slight suspicion that it all sounds vaguely familiar, you are correct. The whole

You have slept through the old TV series; you've seen the movie; you've groaned with disappointment at the new TV series; and no doubt you've eaten the T shirt! Now you can again boldly play the game that started the whole computer-game industry going. No matter what the box says - what we have here is our old 'friend' Star Trek! The sound is a passable imitation of a Spectrum burping and the graphics are almost non-existent. Five years ago when it was written (according to the copyright date on the box), this was no doubt the state-of-the-art computer-game. It is undoubtedly the ultimate Trek game containing every bell and whistle you could wish for, but I would be surprised if anyone other than a certified 'Trekie' would think that it was worth considering at this price.

AM

concept of this game undoubtedly revolves around the classic Star Trek computer game. The game comes complete with three very bulky training manuals which

explain the workings of the game in minute detail. Even the formulae used in the calculation of the phasor power required to blow up enemy ships at varying distances are discussed. Strategy is exhaustively explained and in this area the manuals cannot be faulted.

Your aim in this game is to gradually increase your skill level by playing against a larger and increasingly more manoeuvrable opponent. In the early games the enemy ships are stationary, but in later encounters things get mobile. At the end of each successful mission you will be awarded various medals and promotions until you rise from lowly Space Cadet to the illustrious rank of Admiral - no doubt collecting along the way such medals as 'The Hero of the Alliance Gold Star with Meteors and Diamond Clusters'!

All actions inevitably drain your power source and for this reason you must keep a weather eye on the location of your nearest starbase where repairs (and no doubt Dilithium Crystals) wait patiently for your return. Some of the refinements which have been added to the basic game, include Long Range Probes and the option to watch a hands-off, action replay of your last mission. The long-range probes may be blasted across the unknown wastes where they will beam back the location of any ships and starbases they encounter to automatically update your galaxy map. Minefields may be laid which, in addition to blasting passing ships, will serve to render visible any nasty Krellans which happen to be sneaking around under the protection of cloaking devices.

This game is billed as the first of a series of Star Fleet games. It remains to be seen what the rest of the series has to offer over this version of the old favourite.

STA



Star Fleet bares more than a passing resemblance to the original text-based Star Trek games with their galactic map and short-range scanner

STA Rating

50%

GRAPHIC/ TEXTS: 40%

GAMEPLAY: 55%

ORIGINALITY: 40%

ADDICTIVENESS: 55%

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